



LSPC Newsletter, March 2020

Prisons In A Time Of Pandemic: Protect Our Loved Ones Inside

Message from the Executive Director



I was incarcerated in San Quentin when a flu epidemic ripped through the prison. You could literally see and hear it coming. Think of an airplane hangar, within which a 5-story wall of 4 ½ x 10-foot cells stretches hundreds of feet long, caging hundreds of fathers, brothers, and sons. You hear the man at the far end of the block and a couple levels down start coughing hard. He's blowing his nose, coughing up phlegm, and spitting it out. Hopefully into the toilet.

Dorsey Nunn

Then the cat next to him starts coughing. Then the person above that one. Then the CO walking the tier coughing hard while passing every cell. Every day, every hour, you can hear the sickness coming towards you. And there's not a damned thing you can do about it.

While there's a foot of concrete between you and your neighbor, between you and the wide-open space filled with sickness are just 14 steel bars and a whole lot of air. In the dining hall we're packed together, sharing trays and food. Sure there's a "hospital," but, given the history of inadequate medical care, infected people have few real options. We have been aware that the prison population has been aging for decades, so it should surprise no one that they are at the greatest risk.

While my experience at San Quentin happened decades ago, the prison itself hasn't changed. People are still crammed into cages. There's a larger, more modern medial ward, but there are exponentially more people incarcerated there, too. And a larger staff of CO's rotating in and out all day—currently only being "asked" if they have symptoms of the virus. No testing. But our families, neighbors, and friends are being treated as if they're vectors of deadly diseases, and they've had all their visits cancelled.

You can't isolate the 2.2 million people currently incarcerated in the whole country from each other, and, in reality, from the rest of the community.

What are our options?

We demand the immediate release of people most vulnerable, starting with people over 50 and people with medical conditions. Also release people who are near the end of their sentence so, like with the current Alternative Custody Program, they can be with their families during this crisis. This also results in creating more space inside prisons.

We demand prison and jail staff take all necessary precautions to protect the people currently incarcerated. Test everyone—especially the CO's and deputies rotating in and out of the facilities multiple times a day. Provide real health care. And be open and transparent about both conditions and practices. People die in darkness.

We demand direct, cost-free contact with family members. Stop charging a dime for calls, emails, or letters. Outside, we're up in arms when people exploit the vulnerable by jacking up the prices of sanitizer, soap, toilet paper, and other necessary supplies. But prison and jail canteens price-gouge on a daily basis, and everyone's ok with that? Telecom companies, JPay, and Department of Corrections across the country have been holding incarcerated people and our family members hostage for profit for decades. It's time to stop this immoral practice of putting profit over people. CDCR recently announced free calls for a week—a good start but not enough. Give each person inside a cell phone to keep in free, constant contact with their family. Our families could better manage our resources, everyone will benefit.

Now is an extraordinary opportunity to strategically release the elderly and the most vulnerable people into restorative justice programs in their own communities. We can beat this global pandemic by starting with saving the most vulnerable in our society—our people in prisons in jails. Call on your local sheriff and state DOC secretaries to protect our people and keep our families together. Now is truly a time of All of Us or None.

Policy Update

Census 2020

#WeCount!

From the Three-Fifths Compromise to Jim Crow, those in power have used the Census to further disenfranchisement while increasing their own power. In the 2010 census, 1.5 million people of color were not counted, while white Americans were over-counted. This means that wealthier, white communities receive more than their fair share of resources and representation.

Specific to our communities: In most states, if your loved one is in prison, they will be counted as a "resident" of the city and county where the prison is located, NOT where your family lives. As the prison population is disproportionately Black, Brown, and people of color from urban areas, [prison gerrymandering](#) results in transferring political power and public dollars to mainly rural, white counties.

While California passed a law ending prison gerrymandering for **future**

censuses, it is *still in effect for Census 2020*. It is vital that family members complete the Census so that our communities are counted, not just their cages.

All of Us or None is working with the [United Way Bay Area](#) and the [Silicon Valley Community Foundation](#) to canvass our Bay Area communities and to help people know about and complete the Census.

March 12-20: Households will begin receiving official Census Bureau mail with detailed information on how to respond to the 2020 Census online, by phone, or by mail.

March 30-April 1: Census takers will canvass shelters, soup kitchens, and outdoor encampments.

April 1: Census Day is observed nationwide. By this date, every home will receive an invitation to participate in the 2020 Census. Once the invitation arrives, you should respond for your home in one of three ways: online, by phone, or by mail.

April: Census takers will begin visiting / phone banking college students who live on campus, people living in senior centers, and others who live among large groups of people.

May-July: Census takers will begin visiting / phone banking homes that haven't responded to the 2020 Census to help make sure everyone is counted.

Online: [Official U.S. government website with info and forms.](#)

Door-To-Door Phone-to-Phone: With the global coronavirus pandemic making door-knocking a no-go, All of Us or None members and other canvassers will be phone banking to neighborhoods in Berkeley, Oakland, San Francisco, and East Palo Alto to make sure our communities are aware of the Census and that people get the language and technical assistance they need to complete the census.

Check out [All of Us or None's "#WeCount - Census 2020" information brochure here.](#)

For more information about the Census, or for local assistance filling it out, contact LSPC Program Manager Errol Veron at: errol@prisonerswithchildren.org / 415.625.7058

2020 CENSUS

**#WeCount
in Our Communities
Not in Their Cages**

From the Three Fifths Compromise to Jim Crow, those in power used the Census to further disenfranchisement while increasing their own power. In the 2010 census, 1.5 million people of color were not counted, while white Americans were over-counted. This means that wealthier, white communities receive more than their fair share of resources and representation.

This Census, let's make sure #WeCount all our formerly-incarcerated comrades and family members and keep our resources—our schools, health care, social services, and housing—in our community!

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE 2020 CENSUS:
UNITED WAY BAY AREA • UWBA.ORG/CENSUS

**OR CONTACT ALL OF US OR NONE
PROGRAM MANAGER ERROL VERON**
ERROL@PRISONERSWITHCHILDREN.ORG / 415.625.7058

www.allofusornone.org

Here are the current bills LSPC / All of Us or None are either co-sponsoring or actively supporting during the 2020 legislative cycle.

FORMERLY/CURRENTLY INCARCERATED CIVIL RIGHTS:

- **Voting Rights for People On Parole** - ACA 6 / AB 646 (McCarty) - COSPONSOR

These bills would approve the right for people on parole to vote and pave the way for a constitutional amendment which would be put to the California voters in November 2020.

- **Licensing for Homecare and Childcare Workers** - AB 1608 (Holden) - SUPPORT

This bill would afford persons with criminal convictions the ability to apply for and receive professional licenses and certifications that are overseen by the Department of Health and Human Services, including home health aids and licensed child care providers. It would also provide people with convictions the ability to serve on the boards for nonprofit and licensing entities.

- **EMT Licensing** - AB 2293 (Reyes) - SUPPORT

This bill would afford persons with criminal convictions that ability to be certified, licensed, and hired as Emergency Medical Technicians for fire fighting purposes.

- **ICE out of CA Prisons and Jail Coalition** - AB 2596 (Bonta) - COSPONSOR

This proposed bill would build on recent criminal justice reforms that were passed to reduce the size of prisons and prohibit CDCR from holding, notifying, or transferring to federal immigration authorities individuals who have earned parole after serving time in state prison for any offenses for which they were convicted as a youth. This bill will also address gaps left by amendments and cuts to SB 54.

- **Community Care Facility Exemptions** - SB 1367 (Pan) - COSPONSOR

This bill would modify the process for an individual—who has a criminal record for specific types of nonviolent offenses committed over 10 years ago—to acquire a community care license by providing information other than a character reference, including, but not limited to, their employment history or evidence of completing educational goals.

- **Professional License Access** - AB1608 (Holden) - SUPPORT

This bill reduces employment barriers for people with convictions who apply for professional licenses through the Department of Social Services.

- **CAL ID for Prisoners** - AB 2835 (Stone) - SUPPORT

This bill expands the current California Identification Program by requiring the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to ensure everyone released from a California state prison receives a government-recognized form of ID.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE:

- **Child Support Reform** - SB 2325 (Carrillo) - COSPONSOR

This bill would reinstate previous law that suspended a money judgment or order for child support for any period exceeding 90 consecutive days in which the person ordered to pay support was incarcerated or involuntarily institutionalized, except as specified. Under that law, a suspended child support obligation resumed on the first day of the first full month after the release of the person owing the child support.

- **Child Support Reform** - SB 2029 (Berman) - COSPONSOR

This bill would exempt child support payments paid by a member of the assistance unit to or for an individual living outside of the assistance unit's home from being included as income for these

purposes (“double counting”).

- Fair Wages for Prisoners - SCR 69 (Bradford and Skinner) - COSPONSOR

This passed resolution-turned-bill would increase wages for incarcerated workers, providing dignity in work, the opportunity to meet financial responsibilities to their families, and preparation for a successful reentry. By increasing wages of incarcerated workers, the state would also benefit by decreasing recidivism rates and promoting public safety, as well as increasing state income tax.

- Debt Free California - SB 144 (Senator Mitchell) - COSPONSOR

Building on the recent decisions of certain counties (such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Alameda) to end the collection of certain court and probation fees, this bill would repeal state law authorizing specified criminal justice fees.

PRE-TRIAL RELEASE:

- Cash Bail/Bail Reform - Oppose [Referendum 1856 on SB 10](#) (Hertzberg, Allen, Atkins, Beall, Bradford, Lara, Mitchell, Monning, Skinner, Wieckowski, and Wiener) - COSPONSORED

This referendum seeks to repeal SB 10, the 2018 law that replaced the money bail system and instead gave judges discretion—using a public safety risk assessment—whether to release someone charged with a criminal offense. Referendum 1856 would return money bail, which allows counties to incarcerate thousands based on people’s inability to pay.

YOUTH JUSTICE:

- Raise the Age - *No bill number to date* - COSPONSOR

This coalition has been newly formed by CURYJ and Policy Link and seeks to lobby and draft legislation to raise the age individuals to be considered juvenile and be adjudicated by DJJ to 25 years of age.

- Education, Not Probation - AB 901 (Gipson) - SUPPORT

This bill decriminalizes truancy and limits the discretion of the Probation Department to place young people on “voluntary probation,” and ensures students receive appropriate interventions and are not criminalized with “voluntary probation” for academic reasons or typical adolescent behavior.

- Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act Funds - No Number to date - SUPPORT

This bill would reinvest JJCPA dollars into community-based services for youth to ensure access to effective support within the community and limits harmful contact with the youth criminal justice system.

PROBATION, PAROLE, AND PARDONS:

- Parole Reintegration Credits 2020 and Travel Restrictions - AB 277 (McCarty) - COSPONSOR

This bill would provide people on parole with time credit for successfully meeting educational goals and participating in rehabilitation programs beyond their basic parole requirement. A person on parole who successfully participates in such programs could also have the 50-mile travel limitation (typically associated with parole) expanded to a greater distance.

- Pardon and Commutation Reform Coalition - [AB 2845](#) (Bonta) - SUPPORT

This bill would create a Pardon & Commutation Panel that would review pardon and commutation requests, instead of these requests being reviewed by the Governor as is currently the case. The Panel should include formerly incarcerated people and community-based reentry experts.

LSPC Policies Currently Under Development

- Increase Gate Money—the amount given to each person upon release of prison—to 2020 cost-of-living standards. CDCR Gate Money has remained at \$200 since the 1970's.
- Abolish Involuntary Servitude and the "slavery clause" in the state and national constitutions (i.e. the
- Restoration of Rights to formerly Incarcerated people once off parole. When your time's done, all civil and human rights should be restored.



LSPC is excited to announce the appointment of Ken Oliver as Policy Manager!

For more information about LSPC / All of Us or None's Policy Agenda, contact Ken Oliver at: ken@prisonerswithchildren.org / 415.625.7059

All of Us or None

Participatory Defense

All of Us or None, as part of the Northern Alameda Hub, joined over 150 participatory defense organizers to get specific training on how families can advocate for their loved ones in the court process. We were also able to network with folks from all over the country and reconnect with some All of Us or None Chapters.

For more information about Participatory Defense, contact AOUON National Organizer Oscar Flores: oscar@prisonerswithchildren.org / 415.625.7048



"Time Saved" tallies the maximum sentences people faced, and what the outcome was after practicing the Participatory Defense model.

AOUON National

Featured chapter: Sacramento

Organizers Henry Ortiz, Aaliyah Muhammad, and others have reinvigorated the AOUON Sacramento chapter—and they have been busy!



*All of Us or None Sacramento hosted a panel discussion on the film **Just Mercy**, featuring three formerly-incarcerated people, a public defender, and a district attorney. The audience were students from Luther Burbank high school in Sacramento California.*



All of Us or None Sacramento Senior Staff Organizer Henry Ortiz (right) was interviewed by Univision, where he Ortiz spoke about Assemblymember Rob Bonta's press conference and legislation protecting community members from ICE. He also talked about the problems connected to mass incarceration among black and brown youth, as well as the steps and measures community-based organizations are taking statewide.



We help a press conference with Assemblymember Rob Bonta (center left, behind speaker), who is introducing three bills against ICE. All of Us or None supports the three bills along with representatives of Asian, Latinos, and Middle Eastern communities, who are heavily impacted by ICE.



All of Us or None organizer and formerly incarcerated gang expert Jesse DeLaCruz (left) meets with CDCR Secretary Ralph Diaz (center) to talk about a research project conducted by formerly-incarcerated men for formerly incarcerated men in the school-to-prison pipeline, the impact of trauma, and gang violence.



Showing up to the capital to stop AB 665, which would reverse criminal justice reform bills



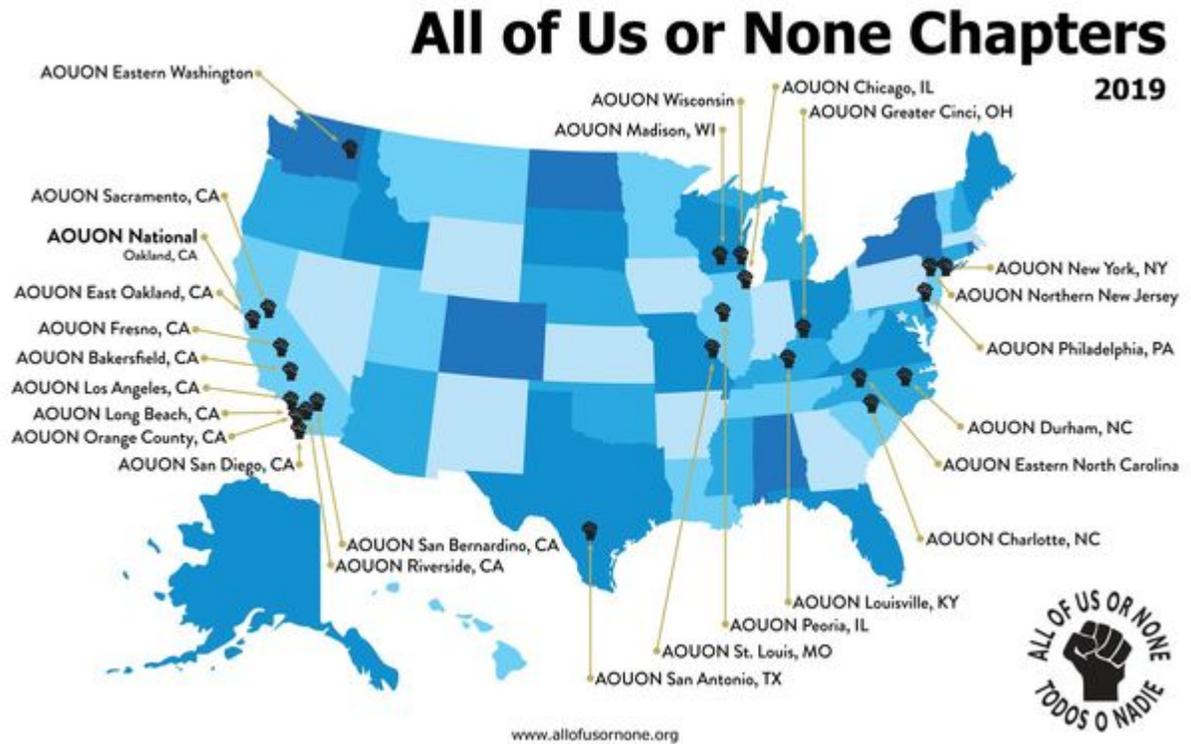
All of Us or None Sacramento show up to pay respects to senior icon and organizer Dolores

we helped pass in the last few years.

Huerta (right) on her 90th birthday.

For more information about AOUON Sacramento, contact Henry Ortiz at: henry@prisonerswithchildren.org / 209.762.0850

Want to get involved in other communities across the country? [Contact one of the many AOUON chapters:](#)



Don't see an AOUON chapter near you? Contact AOUON National Organizer [Oscar Flores](#) to start one: oscar@prisonerswithchildren.org / 415.625.7048

Family Unity Matters



Family Unity Matters met with Dolores Canales from California Families Against Solitary Confinement on Feb 14 in San Rafael to greet a bus coming from Los Angeles with families on their way to visit incarcerated loved ones at Pelican Bay State Prison. Family Unity brought cookies for all the families,

and McDonald's gift cards for all 12 kids on the trip. Dorsey spoke to the families about the policy work AOUON has done and continues to do. FUM Coordinator Ivana Gonzales shared program brochures and spoke to family members about the resources available for their incarcerated loved ones, such as letter answering, keeping them up to date with policies, LSPC manuals and our work with Lifelines. FUM is planning to join one of these trips in the summer along with Dolores Canales.



Family Unity Matters Coordinator Ivana Gonzalez (center) at a breakfast for people visiting loved ones in Pelican Bay.



Dorsey Nunn (right) speaking with people who will soon bus to Pelican Bay to visit incarcerated loved ones.

We've also started Family Unity Gatherings for family members of currently incarcerated loved ones as well as people recently released from jail or prison. After the virus pandemic ends, the meetings will take place on the second Friday of every month, at the [Freedom & Movement Center in Oakland](#).

For more information, contact Ivana Gonzales at: ivana@prisonerswithchildren.org / 415.255.7036 x303.

Welcome 2020 Policy Fellows!

Legal Services for Prisoners with Children is excited to announce the 2020 "Elder" Freeman Policy Fellows: Paul B., Michael G., and Dejohnette Shoemaker!

Paul B. continues his Fellowship from 2019, focusing on policy and local AOUON membership. Welcome back, Paul!



Dejohnette Shoemaker, in addition to being a 2020 Policy Fellow, is an Underground Scholar student at UC Berkeley studying Policy and Legislation. She served 26 years on a life



without the possibility of parole sentence (LWOP). While inside, she organized a commutation support group, resulting in 7 out of 9 people serving LWOP receiving interviews, and 6 receiving actual commutations.



Michael G. comes to LSPC after three years of working as an educator in New York City, where he was born and raised. Michael has always been driven to effect positive change in his community through advocacy and service. He has years of experience working on reentry issues for formerly incarcerated individuals, and he also has federal policy experience with Drug Policy Alliance.

Michael's direct experience with incarceration only strengthened his political consciousness and his belief in prison abolition. He believes the best way to solve society's problems is through community-based supports instead of resorting to punishment. Michael first joined All of Us or None in 2016, and he admires the organization's centering of directly impacted voices. Michael will not rest until we have dismantled the prison-industrial complex, systemic racism, and heteropatriarchy.

London Croudy, a 2019 Policy Fellow, is currently a 2020 Communications Fellow, focusing on video and social media. Check out her work on [AOUON Instagram!](#)



Welcome New Staff!

LSPC is excited to announce our two new staff members: Bridget Cervelli

and Paula Lehman-Ewing!



Bridget Cervelli joins us as the Senior Staff Organizer for California chapters of All of Us or None. After more than 15 years spent cycling through the county jail system, she is fiercely dedicated to providing support and restoring power to those who are criminalized. She recently got her Bachelor's degree from Cal State University Long Beach, where she began her research that pushes back against criminological theories that devalue the identity of incarcerated people.

As an intern with the ACLU, Bridget worked on legislation to limit when police could use lethal force. As a policy fellow with Human Rights Watch, she worked to pass legislation that keeps kids under 16 from being tried as adults. In her free time, she organized in the community and served on committees to address the corruption and violence of LBPD, among other issues.

Paula Lehman-Ewing joins LSPC to revive the All of Us or None newspaper, a critical tool to lift the voices of directly impacted members of AOUON and to share stories about how the criminal justice system impacts individuals, families, and communities.



Paula is a former criminal justice reporter. While with *The Daily Journal*, her article exposing the faulty pretrial risk assessment tool being used by Los Angeles Probation was a finalist for a California Newspaper Publishers Award. The more she learned about the criminal justice system, the more she wanted to change it and she sought ways her writing could have a greater impact. Most recently, Paula worked as a transitional member of SF District Attorney Chesa Boudin's communication team, helping to draft his inaugural speech and the rollout of his policies ending cash bail and creating pretrial diversion programs for primary caregivers.

LSPC's office will be closed until further notice.

Staff will be monitoring email and voice mail.

For general information, contact info@prisonerswithchildren.org / 415.255.7036

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