All of Us or None is an organizing movement started by people who have been in prison in order to challenge the pervasive discrimination that formerly incarcerated people, people in prison, and our family members face. Our goal is to strengthen the voices of people most affected by mass incarceration and the growth of the prison industrial complex. Through our grassroots organizing, we are building a powerful political movement to win full restoration of our human and civil rights.

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A person perspective
A Note From AOUON Founding Member Dorsey Nunn

Juneteenth celebrates the arrival of the news of “Freedom!” to African American communities in Texas in 1865—two years after the Emancipation Declaration was signed by President Lincoln.

One look at the currently incarcerated thousands still laboring for pennies, however, makes you think that, 156 years later, some didn’t get the message.

See incarcerated firefighters saving lives and homes—saving California $100 million a year while being paid dollars a day—during the summer and repairing dikes and other infrastructure in the winter, watch incarcerated people being leased out to private corporations for a fraction of minimum wage, stand on the levy at Angola and see hundreds of captive Black and Brown bodies working the fields, then you understand how we—the millions of formerly and currently incarcerated people and family members—see Juneteenth not as a day of Freedom but as a day which highlights that “the gross injustice and cruelty” of slavery and Jim Crow still exist.

The Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th Amendment might have ended unrestricted private slavery, but the 13th Amendment’s “exception clause” and California’s Article 1, Section 6 codify slavery and involuntary servitude (respectively) in foundational governing documents, effectively creating, through a system of Jim Crow laws and convict leasing, the modern prison industrial complex.

156 years after Juneteenth, and slavery and involuntary servitude are still legal and on the books! And not only that, but groups (including Sheriffs and Corrections officials) are fighting to keep prison labor possible! In 2021!

But what is surprising: in California—with its reputation as a liberal, progressive state—no one has already stood up to strip slavery from our state constitution. Colorado and Nebraska have already done it. Now it is our time.

As the Executive Director of an organization led, staffed, and serving formerly and currently incarcerated people and family members, I stand up and say “I object!” to legalized slavery and involuntary servitude, both in our state and in our country.

(Excerpt from the June E-News Message from the Executive Director on Juneteenth & Abolish Bondage Collectively)
I t has been an honor to channel your voices and stories through the newspaper for the past 15 months. Reviving the All of Us or None newspaper has been one of the great professional joys of my career and I want to thank you all for being a part of it.

It was always my intention to pass the reins of the paper over to a formerly incarcerated editor. I’m humbled to hand this body of work over to Troy Williams. Troy’s work with the San Quentin News and San Francisco Bay View, coupled with his firsthand experience, makes him an ideal candidate for this task. I am confident he will continue to produce a thought-provoking publication that allows those closest to the solution speak truth to power.

I want to thank All of Us or None for allowing me an opportunity to play a small part in this important work. The modern civil rights movement is exciting, exhausting and ongoing. It’s not for the faint of heart, but it does require all of us. As I step back from the paper, I am stepping into a new role in the movement, one that continues to amplify the voices of directly impacted people in an effort to further the ideals of abolition.

I want to especially thank you, the reader, for being my inspiration. Whether you contributed art, words or simply letters of appreciation, your passion, resilience and encouragement has made each paper more of a mission than a task. I hope I have inspired you to at least a fraction of the degree to which you have inspired me.

Finally, in the spirit of leaving you with words better spoken by someone else, I offer this statement by Black feminist Audre Lorde:

“When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.”

You are powerful. Stay strong, stay fearless, and I will see many of you on the road to revolution.

In solidarity,
Paula Lehman-Ewing

Nominate a formerly incarcerated person for the Coming Home section or submit your own story about reentry. Nominations and submissions may be sent to:

AOUON Newspaper Editor
c/o Legal Services for Prisoners with Children
4400 Market Street
Oakland, CA 94608

AOUON|3 June 2021

A little over two months ago I got a call from Dorsey Nunn, Executive Director of Legal Services for Prisoner (LSPC) with Children and one of the founding members of All Of Us Or None (AOUON). When the phone rang I looked at the call box, saw Dorsey’s name, and my first thought was that he was calling me to be a part of some action happening somewhere in one of the states in this county. Over the years I have participated in actions in several different states across America. After spending half my life incarcerated, I joined the movement to for the human and civil rights of current and formerly incarcerated people.

Dorsey called to inform me that LSPC was looking for a Communications Manager and encouraged me to apply. His interest in my work and ability felt good.

Since paroling nearly seven years ago, I have been fortunate to be in a position to be very selective about who and which organizations I choose to work with and/or for. I applied and accepted out of a deep respect for the people and work being done by this organization. I felt that the mission of LSPC/AOUON and the job position were in alignment with my interest, skill set and personal work mission.

My organizing work actually began inside the walls of San Quentin while I was serving a life sentence. I didn’t know or understand enough to call it organizing but here I am standing on the shoulders men and women who fought for my freedom and didn’t even know my name. So it is with gratitude and appreciation for people like Dorsey, Hamdiya, and numerous others that I step into this position as Communications Manager for LSPC.

I pray that I serve all of you, my incarcerated brothers and sisters, well. It is important that your voices are heard. Know that you are the subject matter experts on the issue of prison and conditions you live with. I will be writing more about our work in across this country and will also share more about myself. I encourage you to pick up a pen and share your story as well. We have a column in this newspaper just for you.

If you desire to write about your experiences inside, want to learn to write, news, podcast episodes, contribute art, or music, please feel free to drop me a line? I’m looking forward to hearing from all of you!

Sincerely,
Troy Williams

JOIN THE MOVEMENT: “We are working with city, county, and state policymakers to amend Article 1, Section 6 to strip involuntary servitude from the California Constitution.”

Moss incarceration directly impacts millions of people in this state, and in what ways?

- 1.2 million people have served time in prison
- 3.4 million people have been incarcerated
- 700,000 people are estimated to have been impacted by the “three strikes” law

Have you or someone you know been impacted by the “three strikes” law? Let your voice be heard and sign our petition! Sign now at: 3strikespetition.com
Mail Bag

A NEW APPROACH TO CRIME PREVENTION

Since the dawn of civilization, society has struggled to keep Law and order. Modern times herald “tough on crime” campaigns. Society increasingly locks away offenders and times herald “tough on crime” campaigns. The majority of criminals were victims themselves. The inability to deal with trauma led to addiction, acting out, and eventually crime. The best way to stamp out crime is to prevent it from ever happening. The solution is to be active in society, be aware of the needs of others, and be willing to act for the benefit of others. Everyone from children to adults, poor to the wealthy, single people to parents can play a role in crime prevention.

Adults, if you want to help reduce the revolving rate of recidivism, consider what the community can do to provide other options than crime. For decades, felons have been prevented from finding gainful employment, restricted in housing options, and shunned from taking an active role in leadership roles. Why should sellers who paid their debt to society continue to be marginalized for the rest of their lives? Opportunities to succeed must be extended to felons. If you want to reduce recidivism, try hiring a felon to work at your company, and support anyone who is trying to better their lives.

Mail Bag

STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

On May 5th attorney general Merrick Garland asked Congress for a quote: “historic investment” (end quote) of $1 Billion dollars for the office of violence against women, which provide services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. Garland is motivated by factors I was ignorant of. For instance, I didn't know that most violence against women is committed by their Partners. I didn't know that an astonishing 1 in 4 Women report intimate partner violence, or that every single minute 24 U.S. women experience intimate partner abuse. Did you know that domestic violence is the primary cause of homelessness among women.

I was raised in a household of paternal domestic violence. Over half of the U.S. prisoners share my experience. What I do know is that domestic violence is a learned behavior; it is generational ... because hurt people tend to hurt others. Apart from the secrecy of our household, American culture glorifies the objectification of women. James Bond taught me that women are conquests. Baywatch showed me that women are sexual objects, music videos and still that women are servants to men. Classes in books return me to mainstream reality.

Now I make it my mission to inform my peers that domestic violence is wrong. Now I emphasized that domestic violence begins with verbal insults, belittling, and controlling. Acts like infidelity and coercion are also domestic violence and these forms of non-contact abuse can be just as damaging, if not worse emotionally, because physical injuries often heal faster, while emotional trauma can last a lifetime.

Today, when I hear guys making gender jokes about women, I called him on it. When I hear guys calling women out of their names, I remind them that our grandmothers, mothers, sisters, and aunts are all women, and that the women they are disrespecting are somebody else's grandmothers, mothers, sisters, and aunts. I remind them that we shouldn’t be disrespecting the gender that brought us into this world.

I hope Garland gets that money, but for now, I hope that you’ll join me on this mission.
**I NEED HELP**

My name is Brandon. I understand that your organization focuses on solitary confinement. Unless I'm wrong I don't believe you offered Legal Services. But I know you're in touch with a lot of people and I'm hoping you can get the word out about my situation. I am an army veteran who is the only prisoner in Louisiana (possibly America) who has been sentenced to life in solitary confinement by a criminal court. This sentence violates at least two state laws. La.R.S. 15:824(A) and La. R.S. 15:865.

When I filed it in the state courts and the Western District federal court of Louisiana those courts ruled I wasn’t sentenced to solitary even though it’s in my sentencing transcripts. The courts told me I need to file a 1983 civil suit about it. I knew that suit would be barred under the Heck doctrine, but, to create a conflict in the courts I filed the suit. Sure enough the Middle District of Louisiana found that I am indeed sentenced to life in solitary confinement and barred the suit under Heck.

I am an army veteran... sentenced to life in solitary confinement

See habeas 2254 from the Western District is [LaVergne V. Vannoy WD of La. 14-2805] and the 1983 suit from the Middle District is [LaVergne V. Status Et Al MD of La. 17-1676] and [LaVergne V. McDonald Et Al La. 19-709] These conflicting rulings have allowed me to challenge my situation before the U.S. 5th circuit court of appeals on solid grounds. Additionally I have been helping a latino man with limited english skills with his 1983 challenging his solitary confinement. While doing so I was able to get the Louisiana attorney general’s office and my custodian Warden Sanny Vannoy to admit I am sentenced to life in solitary. [Escobarriviera V. Vannoy Et Al MD of La. 19-498] Documnet 56 pg 141. I used that admission to support both a COA I have before the U.S. 5th circuit for a rule 60 B/D motion and to support a successive habeas corpus request. But the successive petition request was denied.

Finally I represented myself at a federal jury trial in 2016 and was able to secure a jury verdict finding my 8th amendment rights had been violated by the prison when they refused to give me a CPAP for sleep apnea because of my solitary confinement housing [ Lavergne V. Cain Et Al MD of La 13-233] showing I have been harmed by an illegal sentence. I need your help to get the word out about this injustice. I am trying to make sure what I am going through now never happens to anyone else again. Thank you for whatever you can do for me.

This letter to All of Us or None -- pictured above and transcribed below -- was written by Brandon LaVergne, who is currently incarcerated in Louisiana State Penitentiary. He wrote asking for help fighting a sentence of life in solitary confinement.

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**STAFF RESPONSE**

This is a response by All Of Us Or None about 44 California district attorneys suing CDCR over early release of state prisoners

On April 7, 2021, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation instituted new regulations concerning credit earnings for prisoners. On May 26, 2021, forty-four district attorneys across the state of California, led by Sacramento DA Anne Marie Schubert, filed a Complaint against the State of California and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The lawsuit seeks a court order invalidating the regulations because of procedural missteps, specifically arguing that the Administrative Procedure Act, not the Penal Code, must adopt sentence-reducing regulations.

As an emergency response to COVID-19 overcrowding in California Prisons, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation was asked by Governor Newsom’s administration to issue these new regulations concerning credit earning for prisoners offering early release to roughly 76,000 inmates. Credit earnings are incentives for good behavior and good behavior is what leads to people being released before the maximum time given for their respective sentences. Good behavior is also indicative that the person is moving in a direction of rehabilitation and is what the majority of society wants from incarcerated people.

While it is still too early to know exactly how CDCR’s new regulations will play out in regards to an actual timeframe of 76,000 eligible people being released, Sacramento DA Anne Marie Schubert has chosen to pull from the playbook of fear mongering tactics. Fox40 reported Schubert as saying, “Allowing the early release of the most dangerous criminals, shortening sentences as much as 50%, impacts crime victims and creates a serious public safety risk,” Schubert said in a press statement.

It appears that neither the self appointed tough on crime DA nor the forty-four district attorneys involved in this lawsuit are considering the opinions of the majority of crime victims. In addition, the data on recidivism does not support the belief that people who commit violent crimes ought to be locked away for decades for the sake of public safety.

The Alliance for Safety and Justice conducted the first ever national survey of victims’ views on safety and justice. The data collected from victims across the nation state the overwhelming majority of victims actually support rehabilitation over punishment. Here is some data from the report:

- By a margin of 3 to 1, “Victims prefer holding people accountable through options beyond prison, such as rehabilitation, mental health treatment, drug treatment, community supervision, or community service.”
- By a margin of 7 to 1, “Victims prefer investments in crime prevention and programs for at-risk youth over more investment in prisons and jail.”
- “7 in 10 Victims prefer that prosecutors focus on solving neighborhood problems and stopping repeat crime through rehabilitation, even if it means fewer convictions and less prison sentences.”

On one hand this suit shows how many district attorneys are so disconnected from the will of the people. But as one of our staff members said, “Let's focus on the progress.” There are still 12 DIs throughout California who have chosen not to play “follow the leader” in this game of fear mongering.

To our brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, and siblings on the inside we are watching and will continue to report in favor of transforming this system so that it does not eat our young in the same way it ate us.
Jim Crow: From Then to Now  
A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

I t is still shocking to hear people say that slavery ended in the United States with the so-called Emancipation Proclamation. The fact is that too many people, including myself, initially failed to grasp the discrepancy between what we were taught in school vs what is actually written in the Constitution of the United States of America. In spite of what we were told, the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution did not actually end slavery. It created an exception that is still slavery just the same.

Recently All Of Us Or None hosted a webinar entitled Jim Crow: From Then to Now. The webinar was moderated by Legal Services for Prisoners with Children’s (LSPC) Policy Manager Joanna Billingy. The panel featured the world renowned Dr. Angela Davis, Professor and Author Dr. Dennis Childs, and myself, the newly appointed Communications Manager for LSPC.

During that webinar Professor Angela Davis cautioned, “a legal proclamation does not by itself abolish an institution that is so ingrained in this country.” Professor Davis continued, “What many people did not take into consideration was the development of a punishment system in the South in the aftermath of slavery, the convict lease system of course and a penitentiary system that literally incorporated regimes of slavery. So we’re not being metaphorical here. We’re talking about the ways in which slavery continued to exist within prison walls...”

In Slaves of the State, Dr. Dennis Childs exposed how allowing for enslavement as “punishment for a crime” has reintroduced forms of racial capitalist misogynist incarceration that are modern equivalents of the conditions Africans endured in the barracoons and slave ship holds of the Middle Passage, on plantations, and in chattel slavery.

As you read what I have to say, I pray that nothing I say is misconstrued to override the deep sense of remorse I have for the lives I impacted on the day I committed my crime. The lives affected by my actions include the victims directly impacted, as well as all of our families, parents, siblings, children, friends, homies lead astray, and the community at large.

In 1994 I participated in a robbery. Ultimately, I was found guilty of kidnapping during the commission of a robbery and sentenced to life in prison. Prosecutors argued that even though I was not at the location where the alleged kidnap happened. I was guilty based on the actions of my co-defendant. However, my co-defendant was found not guilty of the very same act.

I still remember the bus ride that took me to the plantation we now call prison. I was marched down a long corridor, with majority other black and brown men, toward a mad max type looking prison bus. My wrists were handcuffed to chains strapped around my waist. Another chain connected from my waist to leg irons that also bound my ankles together. With each step the manacles around my ankles clamped down on the back of my heels like vice grips. My ability to step more than one foot at a time was painful and impossible. I was shackled like a runaway slave. I couldn't run even if I wanted to. And believe me, I wanted to. But security was tight. The first and only means of escape I initially saw, once I got to prison, was to immerse myself in law books and fight for my freedom on appeal. I figured that if I were ever going to regain my freedom that I would need to fight in a very different way than how I had become accustomed to fighting. Freedom beyond the bars and barbed wire meant that I needed to understand the law and system that I was up against.

In the past my way of protecting myself was physical. I physically fought whatever came within proximity that I felt was a threat to the survival of my body. Now I recognize that my individual body is a ripple in the timeline of the life of my people. The work we do today is not just for self but for the collective existence of an entire people. It is our goal to remove the shackles for generations to come.

Eventually I found my way to the prison law library. The first time I opened a law book, I got dizzy. The room began to spin. This older Black man walked up to me, handed me a document, and said, “Welcome to the new slave ship.”

The document was a photocopy of the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution. It read, “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”

The words, “EXCEPT AS PUNISHMENT FOR CRIME,” were highlighted.

It felt like the weight of my ancestors crashed down upon me. There I was. Sentenced to life in prison. Not knowing when, or if, I would ever be free again. After all my ancestors had been through, from efforts to regain freedom to the fight for Civil Rights, I realized in that moment that I was in a position to lose it all.

Soon after I was called for a work assignment. Aside from the fact that I did not want to work in a position that maintained the status quo of the prison. The assigned work hours conflicted with my time and access to the law library. And the law library was my access to freedom.

I was told that if I refused to go to work, I would be placed on “C” Status. “C” Status meant that I would be restricted to two hours a day outside my cage. Access to canteen (i.e. ability to buy food & cosmetics), packages from family, and phone calls to family would be severely restricted. Long story short, I was coerced into prison labor.

California has enshrined this same “exception” language in Article 1, Section 6 of the constitution. “We have organized the Abolish Bondage Collectively (ABC) coalition to work with legislators and our communities to rid our state of this aspect of slavery through amending the state constitution.”
Jim Crow (continued from Page 6)

Some of you may ask, “Why does this matter?” Laws affect how society sees and treats a group of people. Laws shape the way people think and behave. No one in America should be forced to work for less than sweatshop wages. No one should be forced to surrender access to family for wages nor life for obedience.

In the words of LSPC executive director Dorsey Nunn, “We need to divorce ourselves from vestiges of white supremacy and slavery. If we don’t delineate that this is not acceptable in our state and federal governments people will not know when they are drifting from punishment to torture or from homicide to murder as in the case of Derek Chauvin.”

You can also join the movement on how we can finally abolish slavery / involuntary servitude by having discussions with others, sending letters, and encouraging your family to get involved.

The battle to abolish slavery and dismantle structural racism in America is still raging, and we need your help to win it. With the rising awareness of how deep structural racism pervades policing and prisons across the country, we now have the opportunity to use the decades of movement work by current and formerly incarcerated organizers, family members, and allies as a launching point to eliminate a key component of systemic oppression: Involuntary Servitude.

The first Africans in Virginia were a group of “20 and odd” captives originally from the Kingdom of Ndongo in modern-day Angola, who arrived in 1619 in the Virginia Colony. This battle against bondage began in the minds of these “20 and odd Negroes” who were forced off ships and traded for food in the English colony of Jamestown, VA. Neither the Civil War nor Emancipation ended slavery, contrary to popular conception, as the 13th Amendment’s “exception clause” encoded forced, free labor in the U.S. Constitution, a situation plantation and factory owners immediately took advantage of through Jim Crow laws and convict leasing programs. Currently, state and federal prisons allow governments and businesses to profit millions of dollars by exploiting a captive labor pool in the name of rehabilitation.

Abolish Bondage Collectively joins other state and national movements to abolish slavery: recently state legislators in Colorado, Utah, and Nebraska stripped their state constitutions of all mentions of slavery and involuntary servitude. If those states, run by conservative legislators, can abolish slavery, surely “progressive” states like California can.

Abolish Bondage Collective is led by current and formerly incarcerated organizers and family members, along with allies who recognize “those closest to the problem are closest to the solution.” And while our personal experience and expertise, coupled with our passionate commitment to the health and safety of all our communities, puts us at the forefront of the fight, we need your help.

It will take all of us, working together and sharing resources, to finally eliminate this vestige of slavery.

We welcome your full participation in the coalition. All we require is your voice and your commitment to uplift the voices of others who are directly impacted by the criminal legal system and the prison industrial complex.

For more information go to: http://prisonerswithchildren.org/ABC/

ABOUT THE ABOLISH BONDAGE COLLECTIVELY CAMPAIGN

Nationally, slavery still enshrined in the 13th Amendment. In California, Article 1, Section 6 of the state constitution allows “involuntary servitude” for those convicted of a criminal offense.

We launched the Abolish Bondage Collectively (ABC) coalition to campaign to end all forms of slavery in the prison system. Our launch began with a webinar panel discussion in Case You Missed It: A video of the webinar can be watched on YouTube @LSPCVideo. The Panel discussion featured Dr. Angela Davis, revolutionary, academic activist, and author of the classic “Are Prisons Obsolete?”, Dr. Dennis Childs, UCSD Professor and author of “Slaves of the State: Black Incarceration from the Chain Gang to the Penitentiary,” and Troy Williams, formerly incarcerated journalist & filmmaker, and current LSPC Communications Manager. It was moderated by LSPC Policy Manager Joanna Billings.

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In May, the California chapters of All of Us or None held the organization’s 9th Quest for Democracy, the second we’ve had to organize digitally. While we will miss occupying the South Steps of the Capitol in Sacramento with you, and flooding the hallways and offices with teams of advocates hungry for justice, we are excited to still be able to create the space where people directly impacted by the criminal legal system can find their voice to move public policy.

Like year’s past, our Quest for Democracy served as an opportunity for us to come together to share challenges, strategies, and successes, to learn about significant legislation and learn how best to advance it, and to connect both individually and as a community. It was an opportunity to come and learn to be part of a choir, and not a soloist — to learn to sing in harmony to pass policy that affects us all.

Dr. King said, “We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.” Just remember that it bends towards justice because we stand on the end to direct its course.

Nearly 700 people registered for this year’s event. Attendees not only heard directly from legislators and policymakers, they were also treated to powerful contributions from Equal Justice Initiative’s Bryan Stevenson and political activist Cornel West.

A full playback of the event is available on the AOUON Facebook page. We want to thank everyone who participated and made this event such a big success.

By Tia Ryans

No one dreams to grow up to become incarcerated or formerly incarcerated. For over a decade I lived in what I call a time capsule. I was eventually released from one of New Jersey’s state prisons but to an area where I had never lived, at an age that people expected me to act in a manner that was foreign to me, and without the support needed for my survival.

The experience of reentry is jarring and All of Us or None Northern New Jersey wanted to bring some of the trials and tribulations to light. That’s why, in May, we launched a new audio series. Hiding In Plain Sight: The Neighbors You Never Hear From. The series takes listeners on journeys of reentry through the first-hand experiences of seven people. My conversations with these individuals shed light on their strengths and courage and open a dialogue for how the reentry process can and should be changed.

For example, for our first episode, I spoke with Cassandra Severe. Cassandra takes us on an emotional journey of surviving sexual abuse as a child, how her acts of rebellion led to her eventual incarceration, and the moment she had to explain to her son that her stay at “college” was actually time spent in jail. Cassandra Severe is a mother, student, survivor, activist, and change agent.

Short clips and full-length interviews are available at www.allofusoronone-northernnj.com/hidden-voices

We are excited to have partnered with Newark News & Story Collaborative and NJ F.O.R.T.E. House. This series is part of the Newark News, and Story Collaborative made possible with funding support from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and the Victoria Foundation. For more information and hear local stories, you can go to newarkstories.com.
June 2021

**Bill Watch**

**California**

- **Removal of Involuntary Servitude from the State Constitution** (Kamlager) ACA 3 would remove the vestiges of slavery from California’s foundational legal document: its constitution. As a constitutional amendment, the bill requires approval from both legislative houses. Should it be approved by the legislature, it will be posed to voters in the 2022 midterm elections.

- **CRISES ACT** (Kamlager) AB2054 would establish the Community Response Initiative to Strengthen Emergency Systems (CRISES) Act pilot program, which will scale up community-based alternatives to police.

- **Anti-Racism Sentencing Reform Act** (Lee) AB1509 would remove the 12-200.5 gun enhancement completely from the state penal code and change the 10-20-25 gun enhancement to 1, 3 and 5 years, respectively.

- **Visitation** (Bonta) AB990 would enshrine visitation as a right (rather than a privilege) for incarcerated individuals and their families.

**Missouri**

- **Clean Slate (Rubel and Lent)** [number pending] would allow individuals with felony convictions for nonviolent and nonsexual crimes to petition the courts to seal their public records. Individuals applying for sealed records would need to have served their whole sentence and have not reoffended in the three years following their release.

**New Jersey**

- **Slavery Exemption** (Rice and Cunningham) SRC 96 is a proposed amendment to the state constitution that would prohibit slavery or involuntary servitude in New Jersey prisons.

**Kentucky**

- **Kentucky Voting Rights** (Higdon) SB62 would amend the Constitution of Kentucky to grant persons convicted of a felony other than a sex offense, a violent offense, or an offense against a child, the right to vote five years after completion of sentence. This bill passed the Senate but was not voted on by the House before the end of the 2020 session.

- **Successful Supervision** (seeking sponsor) is a proposed bill being made by All of Us or None Louisville and ACLU Smart Justice Advocates of Kentucky. It will seek to target supervision to ensure successful outcomes for those that are dealing with the issues from being on probation parole, including the elimination of fines and fees. It will also establish a system of compliance credits, such as Work for Time credit, Education for Time credit, and a mandatory time calculation.

**Missouri**

- **Fresh Start Act** (Koenig) SB 647 would require that no person shall be disqualified from pursuing, practicing, or engaging in any occupation for which a license is required solely or in part because of a prior conviction of a crime, unless the crime for which an applicant was convicted directly relates to the duties and responsibilities for the licensed occupation.

- **Death Penalty With Mental Illness** (Hannegan) HB 1756 would prohibit the execution of any person found to have suffered from a serious mental illness at the time of the offense for which they are accused.

**North Carolina**

- **The Second Chance Act** (Britt, Daniel and McKissick) H 874 would set up automatic expungement for people who are found not guilty or have charges against them dismissed after July 1, 2020, and allow people to petition for the expungement of nonviolent misdemeanor and felony charges after a period of good behavior.

**Pennsylvania**

- **Probation Reform** (Williams) SB 14 would reform how long Pennsylvanians stay on probation and the time served in prison for probation violations. It also specifies that a court may not impose a sentence of probation consecutive to another sentence of probation.

**Texas**

- **Marijuana Reform** (Talarico) HB 4089 would legalize cannabis use, expunge past marijuana convictions and use the new tax revenue to fund early childhood education.

**Washington**

- **Earned Release Time** (Simmons) HB 1282 would restore Washington’s earned time accrual rate to 33% for all incarcerated individuals, ensuring that people are able to earn time off their sentences through participation in education, employment, and rehabilitative programming so that they are better prepared to succeed upon reentry into the community.

- **Juvenile Points** Bill (Hackney) HB 1413 would give anyone who had juvenile crimes (also known as “juvenile points”) used against them in adult sentencing the ability to go back to court for re-sentencing under a lower sentencing range. The bill includes ALL juvenile crimes without any exclusions. HB 1413 has the potential to impact thousands and thousands of people serving (in some cases decades) longer sentences because of crimes they committed as children.
Watani Stiner participated in the Black Power Movement in the 60’s, was falsely accused of a crime he did not commit, and survived CoIntelPro. Forty-six years later, this AOUON member is still CONTEMPLATING A RACIAL REALITY!

By Watani Stiner

Though it seems a lot longer, it’s only been nine months since I was released from San Quentin State Prison. Just a few months after I gathered my belongings, said my goodbyes, and walked eagerly but patiently to be processed from one world into another. I took my final breath of imprisoned air and allowed my ears to surrender the sounds of jangling keys and clanging doors. Twenty-six years of captivity and another twenty years spent as an escaped fugitive in exile. I pondered my new reality on the other side of these concrete walls.

I am moving cautiously through a process of re-learning. Unquestionably, after 46 years, this country has changed a lot: people, places, and a wide variety of “things.” I’m dazzled by magical cell phone apps and thrilled by the readily available flow of information that can be retrieved from my laptop.

While on the one hand, with the assistance of GPS navigation, it’s relatively impossible to get lost out here anymore, it’s also creepy how easily the government can not only track and find you reality of life on this side of the wall. But it is the one I choose to talk about, one I cannot ignore. The last time I walked the streets of this country as a free man was January 1969. Similar to today, it was a time of great social unrest in this country. In 1969, the year I was sentenced, the prison population in the state of California was less than 25,000. The prison population today has skyrocketed to well over 100,000. And the number of young prisoners is astonishing!

The last time I walked the streets of this country as a free man was January 1969.

Even though there are now Black faces in high places, including in the White House, and there are more women in the work force than ever before, poverty, racism and sexism are still very much alive and well. This is the United States of America, the richest and most powerful country in the world. Yet for many of its marginalized citizens, opportunities parallel those in far less developed countries, and those delimited opportunities often line the path to incarceration.

Something is not only outrageously wrong with this picture, it has become the acceptable norm among so many of its people: Police abuse, abject poverty and mass incarceration. This country spends six times as much money on incarceration than it does on education? How is it tolerated by so many people that such extreme disparity, not marginalized or hidden but in plain and distasteful sight, can exist?

I see and long for a genuine racial reconciliation, and a genuine accounting for the shockingly glaring disparity in quality of life which I don’t believe is really comprehended either by the privileged or by the disenfranchised. I long for this reconciliation not just in words, or from some moralistic impulse propagated by a vague notion of “nonviolence” preached mainly to the rage of victims of oppression, but a reconciliation forged out of a deeper understanding of the historical threads, a real reckoning with the intentional, violent, and state-sanctioned oppression that created the economic and social conditions that we all are confronted with today.

Racism—as an ideology and institutional arrangement, and the desire, the rage, the concerns and the guilt engendered by those on both sides of the issue—is nothing new. There has also always been someone, somewhere who stands up and calls out passionately for racial reconciliation and racial justice. There is often someone pleading with America to engage in “a conversation about race.” This conversation is necessary. It is crucial. But all too frequently the conversation doesn’t go very far. I believe this is because in order to really have that conversation, there needs to be a far broader and deeper acknowledgement of the historical devastation that has been thrust upon the once enslaved Africans of this nation.

I’m not only referring to Slavery and that human beings were actually kidnapped and brought here against their wills, but also a much more cohesive understanding about what has been done to these human beings over the last 400 years since we got here. I don’t mean assenting to some disconnected facts about a lynching or a drinking fountain, but grasping that there has been an organized, powerful, pervasive, relentless attack on a certain group of people, perpetrated by their own government and its laws and carried out by its citizens in countless insidious ways. This is critical to understanding why there is such a wide gap in every area of this society. It speaks to why Africans in America are relegated to certain quarters/sections, into areas of inferior housing and education. Why Katrina was not just a hurricane (if you’re Black), and why so many of us are consumed by the criminal justice system. It also speaks to the reason why a majority of White children are taught and learn in secure environments free of poverty, stray bullets and police brutality.

Learning and deeply understanding the history, learning the depths and the nuance of the pain, and suffering, and difference . . . It is this knowledge and depth that are required in order to move the conversation beyond shallowness, because it is necessary for us to move below the surface in order to dismantle the structures weighing upon, shaping, forming the core of our lives and our interactions.

As long as we stay at the surface level, it is easy to miss or dismiss the enormous magnitude of what has happened around racism in this country, and trying to have a conversation without understanding the magnitude goes nowhere. A conversation to what end? What good is there in our having a conversation if all we’re seeking to achieve is a little more pleasant and polite feeling between the races? Is it just about how to live congenially and tolerantly in our inequality? Does the conversation not include action towards structural changes, does it not hint of redistribution or relinquishing of any resources and privileges? If it’s business as usual, what’s the purpose? After intense exchange of racial experiences, after listening to each others’ racial stories... after we smile and laugh and become friendlier toward each other, what’s next? The same racist institutions are still intact. And we resume our separate lives and wait for the next news flash that proves Black lives do not matter!
CORONAVIRUS RESOURCES
SUPPORTING DIRECTLY AND SYSTEM-IMPACTED PEOPLE DURING CRISIS
https://www.beyond-prisons.com/covid19
SAFETY MANUALS FOR INDIVIDUALS IN STATE, FEDERAL AND CALIFORNIA CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES
prisonerswithchildren.org/Coronavirus
COVID-19 MUTUAL AID (NEWARK, NJ)
https://www.allofusornone-northernnj.com/covid-19-newark-mutual-aid

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Visiting Loved Ones is a Right, Not a Privilege!
Support AB990 to Keep Families Connected through increased visitation and support for those in need.

Steps to Passing AB990
Visiting Loved Ones is a Right!
1) Assembly Safety Committee
2) Assembly Appropriations Committee
3) Assembly Floor
4) Senate Public Safety Committee
5) Senate Appropriations Committee
6) Senate Floor
7) Assembly concurrence vote
8) Governor’s signature
All of Us Or None

Slave, who is it that shall free you?
Those in deepest darkness lying.
Comrade, only these can see you
Only they can hear you crying.
Comrade, only slaves can free you.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.
One alone his lot can't better.
Either gun or fatter.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

You who hunger, who shall feed you?
If it's bread you would be carving,
Come to us, we too are starving.
Come to us and let us lead you.
Only hungry men can feed you.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.
One alone his lot can't better.
Either gun or fatter.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

Beaten man, who shall avenge you?
You, on whom the blows are falling,
Hear your wounded brothers calling.
Weakness gives us strength to lend you.
Come to us, we shall avenge you.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.
One alone his lot can't better.
Either gun or fatter.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

Who, oh wretched one, shall dare it?
He who can no longer bear it.
Counts the blows that arm his spirit.
Taught the time by need and sorrow,
Strikes today and not tomorrow.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956)