THE LAUNCH OF OAKLAND REJECTS SLAVERY
About AOUON
All of Us or None is a grassroots civil and human rights organization fighting for the rights of formerly- and currently-incarcerated people and our families. We are fighting against the discrimination that people face every day because of arrest or conviction history. The goal of All of Us or None 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.

OUR PLEDGE
TO DENY THE RIGHT TO SPEAK IN OUR OWN VOICES
TO TREAT EACH OTHER WITH RESPECT AND NOT ALLOW DIFFERENCES TO DIVIDE US
TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY ACTS THAT MAY HAVE CAUSED HARM TO OUR FAMILIES, OUR COMMUNITIES OR OURSELVES
TO FIGHT ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION
TO HELP BUILD THE ECONOMIC STABILITY OF FORMERLY INCARCERATED PEOPLE
TO CLAIM AND TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN CHILDREN AND OUR FAMILIES
TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY STRUGGLES TO STOP USING PRISONS AS THE ANSWER TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS
TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN MAKING OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE FOR EVERYONE

A note from AOUON Founding Member Dorsey Nunn

"YOU CAN VOTE!"

If you are a California citizen who has a felony conviction, and you are out of prison, YOU CAN VOTE.

Still on parole? On mandatory supervision? YOU CAN VOTE!

There are two elections coming up quick—the California gubernatorial recall election on September 14, and the general election on November 2, so there’s no time like RIGHT NOW to register to vote and make your voice heard.

This is exactly why we co-sponsored and helped pass Prop 17 last year—so that people who had been silenced by prison could speak up and have a voice in their communities. For over 15 years, LSPC and All of Us or None has chipped away at the confusing mess and mass of voting restrictions in California until, with the passage of Prop 17 in 2020, we’ve gotten to the point where it’s simple: can’t vote while in prison, but you can as soon as you get out.

And we’re working on restoring voting rights to everyone inside, too, just like in Maine, Vermont, Washington D.C., and many countries across the world.

We won’t tell you how to vote, but we will pose some questions, based on our 40-year experience as formerly incarcerated and convicted legislative advocates and community organizers, that we hope you consider:

• To claim and take care of our own children and our families
• To support community struggles to stop using prisons as the answer to social problems
• To play an active role in making our communities safe for everyone
• To accept responsibility for any acts that may have caused harm to our families, our communities or ourselves
• To help build the economic stability of formerly incarcerated people
• To deny the right to speak in our own voices
• To treat each other with respect and not allow differences to divide us

Your voice matters. Our voices matter. Please vote?

A Note From AOUON Founding Member
Continued on Page 2

Editor’s note
BY TROY WILLIAMS
LSPC COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

I hope that what I write in this editor’s note motivates AOUON readers to follow your passion in spite of any and all naysayers. I spent the first 10 years of my incarceration reading Video Maker Magazine, Variety Magazine, and whatever other media production books I could get my hands on. The most notable part about my experience as a formerly incarcerated filmmaker and journalist is that I have been blessed to be able to take my accomplishments from inside the walls of prison and transfer those skillsets into the free world.

While serving time at San Quentin, I was able to venture outside the box of inmate / wanna-be filmmaker. My big break came in 2007 when Discovery Channel, along with Radical Media, and Bruce Synofsky introduced a film production program to the prison. As one of eight men selected to participate, I wrote, directed, and produced a short movie about the effect of a father’s absence in his child’s life. The short movie called “Absence” aired in part on Discovery Channel in 2009 in a 7 part series called “San Quentin Film School.”

After San Quentin Film School, I was able to create the San Quentin Prison Report (SQPR), the first video and audio production program created by and for incarcerated men. We began producing short videos and audio programs that highlighted transformation in our own voices from inside the walls of one of the most infamous prisons in the world.

My opposition was, not only, shows like “Lock Up,” who demonized us and used fearmonger tactics to scare the world about our potential coming back, but opposition also came from the naysayers and haters I lived among. Those who said it couldn’t be done and then became envious when we did it.

This journey began at a time when many of us didn’t know when or if we would ever be released. Ultimately, these efforts gave rise to other successful video programs and podcasts coming from inside the walls of prisons in California.

It is important to note that those same ideas, scripts, and business plans that I began crafting while locked inside a cage continue to be developed out here in the free world. The bottom line is, “If I did it, you can too.” Just remember the road to freedom begins now. Follow your dream. Pursue your passion. If you don’t then who will?

Contact Editor Troy Williams at troy@prisonerswithchildren.org

COVER ARTIST
Scott W. Smith A.K.A. Scotty Scott is an incarcerated artist serving a life sentence in a California State Prison at Corcoran. This art is done in pencil and pen.
Life is a journey of lessons and growth
BY CANDACE HIGHTOWER

There’s no amount of reading, YouTubing, or any other baby intel resource out there that can prepare a woman for the feelings that she will experience once becoming a mother. The idea of responsibility for life itself has been taken to a new level, and although every person’s experience is unique, the one thing that can be said across the board is that every person’s experience is unique, the one thing that can be said across the board is that this experience is meant to be life changing. Positive. That’s it: Two lines. I was positively convicted myself, given the gift that I had over the years secretly convinced myself that I would never receive.

I was blessed with a gift that I had over the years secretly convinced myself that I would never receive.

The one thing however that is not to be overlooked, is the absolute importance for me to lean into my village for what I need. Whether it is an ear to cast my worries onto, a hot meal when I can’t make it to the kitchen, or a phone call to share a moment of laughter; the village keeps me sane. The village brings me resources. The village helps me survive. Being trustful, vulnerable, and having discernment are my greatest tasks and blessings when fellowshipping with my people.

The first step that I did have to take before embarking on this journey, was accepting that despite all of the wrongs that I have committed in my lifetime, that I am completely worthy of this blessing and that the universe saw fit that it was time.

Next came leaning into the multitude of wise, supportive, loving people that I have had trickled into my life over the years.

Then creating somewhat of a plan and being mindful along the way to give myself grace for all the mistakes I have yet to make.

It has taken a good amount of time for me to get to the point that I have in forgiving myself for all of the ways that I have taken from people in my life. Robbed of time. Robbed of money. Robbed of trust. And just when I thought I was at a healthy place of acceptance, at the age of 33, I was blessed with a gift that I had over the years secretly convinced myself that I would never receive.

Ha! Isn’t life funny. Admittedly, it took a bit of time, meditation, and prayer, for me to reach the conclusion that nothing in my life has been by accident, and it certainly wasn’t going to start now. Oddly enough, what helped me reach that conclusion was a moment of love that I shared with myself that is beyond what words can explain.

Emotionally, this process of accepting this responsibility of parenting has come with a good amount of self evaluation, self talk, and self love.

Now the next chapters in our lives will be pivotal. Every decision I make moving forward will directly affect this human in both positive and negative ways. This human - this black boy - will inevitably have an impact on this world. Having such a realization has changed my day to day immensely. Never have I experienced selflessness at a capacity as great as this.

I can only continue to lean on my ancestors, my tribe, and my life experience to guide me along the way - gently forgiving and loving on myself each step that I take. Life is, afterall, a journey of lessons and growth. There is no growth without mistakes. A constant reminder of these things are what keeps me strong and vigilant as I try day after day to get it right. I can only hope that my son sees the way that I love myself and extends the same type of love to himself. Except for learning from my mistakes and doing it better.

Candace Hightower has given public speeches educating tourist at Alcatraz Island on issues of modern day incarceration. She is an events coordinator who was recently certified as a paralegal and is looking for work.

A Note From AOUON Founding Member
Continued from Page 1

In addition, here are some thoughts on returning elders. Recently a few comrades of mine returned from decades of incarceration. After spending the prime of their lives in prison, they came out with few resources and little support. Sometimes they’ve been in so long that almost everyone in their family or everyone they knew had already passed away.

In California, no matter how much time they did, they come out of prison with $200 of gate money. Or $200 minus $30 which equals $170 if they needed dress-outs and had to buy state issued clothing to wear home. This consist of a grey sweatshirt and pants.

Or $200 minus $30 for dress-outs minus another $15 if they wanted something to eat and drink on the way to the transition house.

They were given $200 with which they were supposed to find a place to live, get clothes, food, and enough hygiene products to get them on their feet, in California, in 2021.

This $200 was the exact same amount I received when I exited from San Quentin many decades ago.

The purchasing power of $200 in 1970 is equivalent to $1407.23 in 2021. While we can crowdsource and gofundme and chip in for each comrade elder coming out, it’s not enough. And it strains the communities that usually have more love than money to give. We need to create a program with serious resources.

I’m committed to building a program that will be able to help long after I’m gone. Are you in? Are you willing to join us in trying to figure out a solution for returning elders coming back to our community? If so, send us a note, email, or letter. We can figure this out together.

(An excerpt from August e-News Message from the Executive Director)
For Natives like me, justice has never been just

BY JENNI MONET JOURNALIST FOCUSED ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

It’s common knowledge that Indigenous Peoples, like Blacks and the Latinx, are incarcerated and killed by law enforcement at rates that pale in comparison to Whites. And when you map out the data, it’s not a surprise that much of this injustice is happening where some of the highest Native populations exist — and in some of the most conservative states: the Dakotas, Alaska, Oklahoma and Arizona. One state that’s a wild card is where my Indigenous homelands are situated in liberal-leaning New Mexico. The year I was illegally arrested in 2019, the state had just been ranked as one of the deadliest places to be fatally shot by police — not just for that year, but for the fourth year in a row. I could have been one of their victims.

In 2014, the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice ranked Native peoples as those most likely to die from encounters with law enforcement, though the deadliness experiences would surface a few years later between 2016 through 2017. According to mappingprisonercideviolence.org, over the course of that time, a total of 71 Native men and women were killed by officer-related incidents. It shouldn’t escape one’s assessment that this spike also ran parallel to the rise of Donald J. Trump.

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Native American journalist Jenni Monet discusses her experiences with police brutality and racial profiling as a member of the Lipan Apache nation.

The evidence teaches: losing our history only requires that we neglect to package and pass it on. Then when we die, it will die with us.

In the Spring of 1978, 13 years after the death of Malcolm X, Bruthas in San Quentin’s Adjustment Center convened a group and sketched out the outline for Black August Memorial (BAM). BAM is a month-long observance. A remembrance for New Afrikans Martyrs: W.L. Nolan, Clevelan Edwards, Alvin Miller, Johnathan Jackson, James McClain, Comrade George and Joka Khatar of the California Prison Movement. These stalwarts are the focus of the Observance’s FLEA days: BA/1 Khatarl, BA/7 James & Johanna, BA/13 WL Clev and Jug, BA/21 George. Their exemplary commitment is honored by BAM participants with four 24-hour AM to 12AM fasts to be held on BA/1, BA/7, BA/13 and BA/21. The FLEA-days mark the date these soldiers were pushed from this existence. All occurred during the month of August save the 13th, which is a January 1970 date.

During BA’s twenty-seven non-FLEA days prisoners fast from sun-up until dinner is served. Black August is an inspirational program. Its regimen is designed for individual development and transformation. In the heat of your location it may be asked: “Why should I subject myself to this hardship?” The short answer is you don’t have to. However, we’re all old enough to know everything is easy, and the crucifix of prison and beyond knowledge of self is valuable. You’re probably curious as to how your participation in BA will develop you? The answer is through its journal. If you permit it. The journal will help you develop yourself. Therefore, the Keeping of a BA journal is a basic tenet. It is suggested that you identify/select something you’d like to teach yourself; commit to working on it two or more hours daily throughout the observance. Make daily entries in the journal on the goal and how much time you spent working towards it.

As for FLEA-day fast or non-FLEA day fast. It is more important you decide what you decide you’re going to do at the beginning of the day—that is: “Am I fasting?” “Am I semi-fasting?” Eating or not eating only indicates your personal struggles or triumph relative to the decision you made at the beginning of the day. The entries are a gauge which allows the journal to be used for your personal evaluation.

The journal is an instrument of self-criticism designed to further your development. Telling lies, or claiming easy victories isn’t an option. For the journal is your thoughts to you in your hand and evaluated by you!

Above I made mention to the inaugural start of the Black August Memorial in 1979. For 37 years we guarded this memory and in ‘The crucible of prison and becoming’ my personal mission was to package and pass it on. Then when we die, it will die with us.

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Above I made mention to the inaugural start of the Black August Memorial in 1979. For 37 years we guarded his legacy. We have studied its lessons. We have rethought what has been mis-taught. We have practiced and advocated on the death of BAM’s 37th anniversary, we know, we are the best keepers of our story.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
NOTICE TO REGISTER PAROLEES TO VOTE

A s you know from your own personal experience, mass incarceration has not just impacted those who sit in prison cells. You have also impacted! Mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, husbands, wives, boyfriends, and girlfriends of those who are incarcerated are also affected.

Oftentimes, you, the taxpayers have to foot the bill. Now, Through the Governor’s Prison Reform Plan, tens of thousands of prisoners are returning to their families on parole. Because of organizations like yours, our voices are no longer silenced, and together we have been successfully changing this system.

Proposition 17 passed and restored the rights of our returning citizens to register and to vote while on parole. Hundreds, if not thousands of you, family members and friends of those who are incarcerated, came together to help collect signatures which gave Californians the option to vote for Proposition 17 this past election cycle.

Due to your incredible work and the work community members and prison reform organizations, we won! The right to register and to vote while on parole. This was an extraordinary achievement.

Now, we call on you again, to organize and rally in support of Governor Newsom. Because, those who oppose prison and criminal justice reforms, are trying to stop the great works the governors is doing, and has done, on behalf of all Californians.

We ask that all prisons reform organizations and advocates print in newsletters, social media platforms, and other resources available to registered parolees and get the word out immediately in the short time we have. The day to vote is on September 14th, 2021.

We are just beginning to see the promise fulfilled, that our governor has made during his campaign, that he pledged to reduce the prison population, close prisons and end mass incarceration in California by returning incarcerated citizens home to their family, and loved ones.

This is also the part of the campaign where your voice will ring the loudest. It is extremely important that you do your part, by contacting Governor Newsom, and by “Stopping the power grab” When you vote “NO” to recall Governor Canvin Newsome.

Sincerely,

Your friend in the struggle.
Jeffery Tyson

Jeffery Tyson is serving time at California Men’s Colony in Vacaville California.

A s an incarcerated individual I have run into the same problem as many of my brothers. No real way to practice a trade. The problem is that the jobs in prison (in almost all cases) amount to volunteer work that is forced on individuals, KP duty, porter work, yard crew.

These are jobs that can be done in one’s free time to provide for the community. Instead jobs are valued by how good the stealing is and this poisons the culture.

We know the problem you may say, but what to do? Well the answer to that is at hand! The best part is that the groundwork is already laid out. The Handcraft Program (DOM chapter 10, Article 5, pg 81B) is perfect really and here’s why.

One: It’s already in place being located in both the CDCR DOM and CDCR Policy and Regulations Tile 15.

Two: All of the local operating procedures are already there;

Three: It is a known quality for CDCR and especially in particular for staff. It’s hard to fear what you know.

However, the DOM, policy and regulations need a serious update. There is this thing called the internet and other things called amazo and ebay. Handcrafted goods would do excellent. Additionally, computers or “Digital Handcrafts” are now possible. There is the possibility of selling digital content, from preprogramming webpages to video, animation, music, literature, etc. The possibilities are huge.

What about security concerns?!? This is a valid concern however, the risk is minimal, and as long as there is transparency, such as “made by inmate” being printed in bold letters and the crafters name and CDCR, maybe a disclainer of “No warranty”, made in the country of Prison Industrial Complex Land, Etc.

I know many “Jailhouse lawyers.” I am sure the administration could appoint me one, as part of a paralegal vocation. They are capable of doing it in Africa (I don’t remember which country, I saw it on PBS).

I am getting a little off topic, let me recover. Ok, back to the program. The ability to generate an income is critical, it could change the culture. Many without hope, you know the dangerous ones, would now have the capacity to give back the resources necessary for security. This is an opportunity for growth.

The benefits to me are obvious, however I realize not all will understand. The habit, the lifestyle, of earning a living is necessary. One will not be successful in a trade without practice, learning and growth in one’s craft. No amount of vocational training will help someone without the soft skills needed to actually profit from said trade.

Housing, transportation, food, hygiene, and entertainment. These are things that all people need. Unfortunately, these are things many incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people struggle with. But, what if one is released with enough money to pay a month’s rent? With money they made honestly. The esse on the State budget is enough incentive in my opinion.

OK, let’s get it started! Not so fast partner. There is a real obstacle that must be addressed, safely. CDCR doesn’t see it as rehabilitative.

OK, let’s get it started! Not so fast partner. There is a real obstacle that must be addressed, safely. CDCR doesn’t see it as rehabilitative.

Will it at least reduce crime? Yes, most crimes are done for financial gain.

Nuts and bolts time. Where do we start? Now we come back to the handcrafted program. This program for those unfamiliar allows the incarcerated to buy glue and popsicle sticks. OK, maybe not entirely fair, in some prisons I have heard that one can craft jewelry and the like. But it must be sold in the visiting room, which is a very limited market and no advertisements.

The problems are many, logistics; such as money, material, security instruments, and space (a particularly big one for some trades), and politics. Enough said on that.

I know that these problems can be solved. That by implementing a program that allows the skills to practice a trade we can develop the mindset and skills for the legal side of hustle.

Just some thoughts from your friend, All power to the people!

Jesse Rose

Jesse Rose is serving time at CSTA/State Prison at Corcoran in California.

From: Jesse Rose
Corcoran

From: Jeffery Tyson
CMF-Vacaville

Mail Bag

The views and opinions being expressed in the Mail Bag section of AOUON Newspaper are those of the contributor and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the all of us or mere newspaper. Any content provided by contributors, bloggers, journalists or authors are of their opinion and are not intended to be promotion for or against any candidate or political party.

To submit to Mail Bag, please send your article to:

Troy Williams
AOUON Newspaper Editor
4400 Market Street
Oakland, CA 94608
The launch of Oakland Rejects Slavery

The following is a montage of pictures and quotes from the Black August event hosted by Legal Services for Prisoners with Children.

Deja Gould, born and raised in her ancestral village, the Ohlone territory of Huchiun, opened the ceremony in prayer. The Ohlone tribes have inhabited areas from the coast of San Francisco through Monterey to lower Salinas for 10,000 years. Special thanks to Kukou Katamani, Imam Sun-Diata Rashid, and Pastor Anthony for opening West African Ewe, Islamic, and Christian spiritual traditions.

Due to space, we are not able to include details on all participants. For more information, please visit our social media platforms or go to www.prisonerswithchildren.org

Pastro Michael McBride
Activist

Dr. Noha Aboelata,
Founder/CEO
Roots Community Health Center

Pastor Mike: Many have said that in the age of COVID-19 we should make sure that we change our lifestyle. We should eat more healthily. We should work out, take our herbs, turmeric, zinc… get more rest. Talk about the lifestyle changes that need to happen in order for us not to be susceptible to COVID-19!

Dr. Noha Aboelata: We should definitely pay attention to our health. But let me just say this. It doesn’t matter how good you sleep, how many vitamins you take, how many herbs you take, it’s a novel coronavirus. And what that means is that if you haven’t caught COVID or you haven’t gotten the vaccine, you don’t have antibodies. I don’t care how much ginger you take. You don’t have antibodies. The only other way to get antibodies is to catch COVID. In which case you are rolling the dice because we don’t know who does well and who dies with COVID ahead of time. We just don’t.

Paul Redd
Activist

The inaugural start of the Black August Memorial was in 1979. For 37 years we guarded its legacy. We have studied its lessons. We have retaught what has been mis-taught. We have practiced and advanced its tenets. And on the eve of BAM’s 37 anniversary we know, we are the best keepers of our story.

For a full read of Paul’s talk see Page 4 entitled “A brief history of Black August.”

Rudy Corpus
Executive Director
United Playaz

We can’t forget about our people who fought for the struggle to change the conditions for our people. So we could be free and walk around and be in this park… I got to give a shout out to my brother German Yan Bow, my brother, who did 28 years in a pena hoochie (prison) and came home and lost his life to COVID.
Twin brothers overwhelmed with joy that they both won bikes in a free raffle.

Carroll Fife
Oakland City Council
District 3
They have over $330 million (referring to the city). And let me tell you what it's a little secret. Crime is not changing and that's because the real crime is not investing in our communities to begin with that is the crime. So until we fix that and we put resources in the mouth and in the stomachs of our babies and the minds of our babies on day one.

So their communities are safe for elders and little people to play at parks to walk. Street and not have to worry about a drive by or engagement with officers, either one, because all violence that we experience is state violence. So we don't just talk about officers killing people that is important because they are sworn to protect and serve and they harass and incarcerate.

But we also have to talk about those same systems that overpay the police. Well, our centers are unfunded while they close head start throughout our city, where our teachers are not paid a decent wage to be able to afford to be afforded, um, be afforded the opportunity to live here. Right. So when we say that all violence is state violence is because we know them corner boys and the folks out there selling and dealing are typically doing that because they have taken away every other resource they've taken away or underfunded every other resource to give people a shot at a decent life that is violence, that is violence.

So we got to correct that. We've got to invest in our children on the front end. So we don't have to be worried about bars on the back end.

Ke Lam
Program & Facility Manager
APSC
I am out here to stand in solidarity with my brothers and sisters who have been locked down and locked out of the system. When we hear a lot about Black Lives Matter or Stop Asian Hate, in reality what's behind it is capitalism. They are trying to divide us. But we have to come together and beyond our differences.

George Galvis
Co-founder &
Executive Director
CURJ
I want to talk a little bit real quickly about the history of enslavement here in California, because it's older than America.

It's not a coincidence when we look at the very first slave plantations on this continent. The very first prisons were the slave plantations and the reservation and the very first police where the slave catchers and the cavalry. So it's not a coincidence when we look at who's being impacted today, it's people of African and indigenous descent.

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No Exceptions
BY JOHN CANNON
LSPC ELDER FREEMAN FELLOW
"Hand quick to grab his hammer, but for what though? Hard to be inspired when your environment is cut throat. Threw us in the fire, but we survived and then it's up though. Before we smelled flowers we knew the smell of gun smoke. Grandma used to say the darker you is, the harder life. It always made me shed a tear because grandma's darkest night.

They taught us self hate now she scared for life. Concrete jungle. We can barely see the stars at night. Throughout the strikes and they acting like we can't see. Let us up in plantations, but we ain't free. They say it's hard to see the picture. When you in the frame. I'mma make this vision come to life. Watch how you paint me?

Stole this land from the natives called it Thanksgiving. First they enslaved us then taught us they religion. Don't need they history books cause I know it's pages are missing. I can see through their lies, got the laser vision. It's hard to make a way, unless you rich and white. Sleep walking in the day, pain hit at night.

Know this poverty and trauma is a big monster. So I don't even judge my neighbors when he hit the pipe begging for your rights. It's like standing at a pool fishing. You just wasted time. You need to move different. The system got some of y'all think that it's cool snitching. Master pat you on your back. Now you a stool pigeon.

Bro. Keep fighting. You don't lose when you tumble. Pick yourself up. Brother lace your shoes when you rumble. After the Panthers they hit us with the crack. Now it's time to shake back. We ain't removed from the struggle."
Live chats on restoring the right to visit (AB 990)

To support AB 990, our bill Restoring the Right to Visit for Incarcerated Individuals, the Coalition for Family Unity has held a series of Live Chats, a space for supporters to share the importance of expanding visiting to keep families connected. Live Chats are live streamed on CFU’s social media accounts and the accounts of other CFU members or supporters. They are sponsored by different CFU members and allies, and focus on different aspects of the bill. You can watch old Live Chats by going to the CFU Facebook page and looking up our videos.

So far, our Live Chats have included:

- Pride in Truth: Maria Casillas and Tori Gomez, Executive Director and Treasurer of Pride in Truth, which is part of CFU, discuss the importance of visiting and the need to pass AB 990 to knock down barriers to visits in CDCR.
- Legal Services for Prisoners with Children and Underground Scholars: Jesse Burleson, formerly incarcerated LSPC fellow; Kevin McCarthy, formerly incarcerated LSPC fellow and Underground Scholars member at UC Berkeley; and Azadeh Zohrabi, director of Underground Scholars at UC Berkeley discuss the importance of restoring a meaningful legal standard to enforce the right to visit and other statutory rights held by incarcerated people in California, and the importance of visits in rehabilitation and helping, incarcerated people thrive after release. (This Live Chat is available on the Underground Scholars Instagram page.)
- CURYJ (Communities United to Restore Youth Justice): J. Vasquez, Policy Director of CURYJ, a CFU member, joins two other former lifers to discuss the importance of visiting to incarcerated people and the need to restore visiting as a right in California law.
- California Families Rise and SF Board of Supervisors President Shamann Walton: Michelle Chan of California Families Rise, a CFU member, joins SF Board of Supervisors President Shamann Walton who sponsored a resolution supporting AB 990 that was passed by the Board. They were joined by San Francisco native Paul Briley of LSPC and All of Us or None (CFU members) and Ivana Gonzales of LSPC and CFU to discuss how AB 990 would benefit San Franciscans, especially in Pres. Walton’s Bayview district, and build on other criminal justice reform efforts in the city.
- AntiRecidivism Coalition and Young Women’s Freedom Center: Angelique Evans of Young Women’s Freedom Center, a CFU member, and Norma Cumpian of AntiRecidivism Coalition, also a CFU member, discuss parenting while incarcerated, how visits help with parenting, and how AB 990 will make visiting with children easier.
- To learn more about AB 990, go to bit.ly/PassAB990.

Los Angeles Press Conference

Asm. Miguel Santiago, author of AB 990, and Sen. Maria Elena Durazo held a bilingual press conference in downtown Los Angeles urging their fellow legislators and the governor to enact AB 990, the 2021 Family Unity bill that would restore visiting as a right for incarcerated felons in California. They were joined at the podium by Angelique Evans of Young Women’s Freedom Center, who talked about losing her visits as discipline when alcohol was found in her 8-person cell and her mother’s inability to bring her son to visit her because of old convictions; Dolores Canales of California Families to Abolish Solitary Confinement, who talked about how CDCR denies visiting applications for mistakes made on the form; Michael Jurado of Starting Over, Inc., who talked about how visits were cut back after the right to visits was repealed in the mid-1990s; Kevin McCarthy of Legal Services for Prisoners with Children and Underground Scholars, who talked about why the former legal standard for enforcing incarcerated people’s rights needs to be restored to make those rights meaningful; and Edith Chacon and Darlene Ramirez of Homies Unidos, who talked about the importance of visits for incarcerated people and their family members.

In order to stay tuned for future Live Chats about AB 990:

- Follow CFU’s Facebook page (@CoalitionForFamilyUnity)
- Join CFU as an individual member (bit.ly/JoinCFU).
- Organizations who want to join CFU should email Ivana Gonzales at ivana@prisonerswithchildren.org.

SB 354 Update

LSPC’s Family Unity project continues to be actively involved in the effort to pass SB 354 (Skinner), which would make it easier for people with convictions to take in relative children who are in the child welfare system.

SB 354 would give courts discretion to place children with relatives who have convictions that are currently non-exemptible.

SB 354 made it through the Senate and the Assembly Human Services and Judiciary Committees and as of press time was pending in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. We are hopeful that this bill will pass and appreciate the leadership of Starting Over, Inc. in this legislative effort. Also working on the bill are a New Way of Life Reentry Project, Children’s Law Center, and the Alliance for Children’s Rights.
**BILL WATCH**

**CALIFORNIA**

The Vision Act (Carrillo) AB 937, or The Voiding Inequality and Seeking Inclusion for Our Immigrant Neighbors Act, would protect refuge and immigrant community members who have been deemed eligible for release from being funneled by local jails and state prison system to immigration detention.

Visitation as a Right (Bonta) AB 990 was introduced by Legal Services for Prisoners with Children’s Coalition for Family Unity. It would establish a right for non-incarcerated people to visit their incarcerated loved ones.

Abolish Unjust Fees (Bradford) SB 586 would eliminate over 60 fees that can legally be charged to Californians moving through the justice system.

Involuntary Servitude (Kamlager) ACA 3 would remove the exception in the California Constitution that allows for involuntary servitude as punishment for a crime.

Clean Slate (Rubel and Lent) 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.

**MISSOURI**

Death Penalty With Mental Illness (Hannegan) HB 278 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’re accused.

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


Public Health Emergency Credit (Mukherji and Sunter) A4235/S2519 was SIGNED INTO LAW! It requires credits to be awarded to certain incarcerated people being housed in isolation practice of solitary confinement by limiting the time incarcerated people can be housed in isolation. This act will considerably restrict the practice of solitary confinement by limiting the time incarcerated people can be housed in isolation and prohibiting it altogether for vulnerable populations. The law will take full effect in one year.

**NEW JERSEY**


Public Health Emergency Credit (Mukherji and Sunter) A4235/S2519 was SIGNED INTO LAW! It requires credits to be awarded to certain incarcerated individuals and returning citizens during public health emergency. It also prohibits the creditee from having contact with the victim upon release.

**NEW YORK**

Voting Rights (Parker) S 6821 would require the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, in collaboration with state and county boards of election, to establish a program to facilitate voter registration and voting for incarcerated individuals.

Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement Act (Salazar) S2836 has been SIGNED INTO LAW! This act will considerably restrict the practice of solitary confinement by limiting the time incarcerated people can be housed in isolation and prohibiting it altogether for vulnerable populations. The law will take full effect in one year.

**IDAHO**

Clean Slate (Rubel and Lent) 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.

**ILLINOIS**

Right to Vote (Ford) HB4377/HJRCA33 is a bill and constitutional amendment that would ensure incarcerated people can vote in the state of Illinois.

**KENTUCKY**

Successful Supervision is a proposed bill being made by All of Us or None Louisville and ACLU Smart Justice Advocates of Kentucky. It seeks to target supervision to ensure successful outcomes for those dealing with 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.

**NORTH CAROLINA**

The Second Chance Act (Britt, Daniel and McKissick) H 874 has been SIGNED INTO LAW! It sets up automatic expungement for people who are found not guilty or have charges against them dismissed after December 1, 2021, 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.

**WASHINGTON**

**VICITING KEEPS FAMILIES CONNECTED**

- RESTORE VISITING AS A RIGHT!

Support #AB990 to #KeepFamiliesConnected by removing barriers to visiting in CDCR.
Aftet serving 10 years in federal prison, I can vividly remember my first day home 9 years ago. I remember the excitement and relief I felt, finally, I was done serving time and could move forward with my life. However, I would soon discover the many laws and policies in place that would constantly remind me that I was not, or would never be fully free in the world as it is.

Although I consider myself to be accomplished, I still live in the shadow of my conviction record. And not only does this shadow follow me, but my children. Recently, I was forced to explain to my son that I could not chaperone his class for a school trip to a bowling alley because of my record. Often times, fathers are ridiculed for being absent. However, there are barriers in place that prevent fathers who look forward to being active in their children's lives as mentors and chaperones. As my fellow AOUON chapter member Benny Lee states, "When do our wrongs end, and our rights begin?"

People with records, like me, are told to rebuild their lives, in communities with limited resources, without help, while navigating a complicated web of laws that restrict our rights. Everyone deserves to fully participate in society as a free person—to access housing, education, employment, and opportunity. However, people with records cannot fully access these basic human necessities.

That's why we call these laws and policies permanent punishments - because they intentionally deny us opportunities. They create a "prison after the prison," and they follow us for the rest of our lives.

In addition, these permanent punishments impact a lot of people! In Illinois, 3.3 million adults have been arrested or convicted of a crime since 1979. That is potentially 25% of the Illinois population currently dealing with these restrictions on their lives.

We know that the criminal legal system targets and oppresses people of color—especially people experiencing poverty—at every step. As a result, we continue to be haunted by the legacy of mass incarceration and permanent punishments.

The Fully Free Campaign is a statewide movement to eliminate these permanent punishments. We want to provide hope and, most importantly, opportunities for people with records.

Prior to being released from prison, I didn't know that I would be the campaign manager of a movement to be Fully Free. However, I knew I would be a part of the solution. Criminal records should not follow an individual for the rest of their lives regardless of conviction. When we organize, and develop leaders, lives are transformed and we move closer to the world we envision for our communities. It is vital that we continue to organize because everyone deserves the human right to be fully free.

In early August 2021, federal Marshals arrested an activist after protesting the continued incarceration of an elderly prisoner outside the California Medical Facility. The State charged him with a little-known statute that’s rarely enforced - Penal Code § 4571, a law only applicable to the formerly incarcerated that the California Appellate Court has found violates the Equal Protection Clause. The law makes it a felony for any person who has previously been convicted of a felony and confined in a State prison to enter any area where prisoners might be held or any area nearby.

The Constitution requires that statutes not be written or applied in a discriminatory fashion. "(A) statute valid on its face may be unconstitutionally applied, and that discriminatory enforcement even of a criminal statute may be restrained" PC § 4571 does not appear racially discriminatory on its face - it regulates those who have both been convicted of a felony and incarcerated in a State prison.

With these rates, it would be nearly impossible for this Statute not to be disproportionately applied to people of color.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARRESTS &amp; CONVICTIONS</th>
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<tr>
<td>3.3 million adults alive today have been arrested or convicted of a crime since 1979.</td>
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<td>Of these, 1.2 million adults have conviction records and 662,701 adults have felony convictions.</td>
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<td>627,945 adults, or 19.2% of all people with an arrest record were not convicted of a crime.</td>
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<td>These state laws collectively act in 1,250 ways impacting people's access to housing, employment, education, and other opportunities.</td>
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<td>Black people make up 13.9% of Illinois' adult population, but Black people make up 25.5% of those who acquired arrest or conviction records.</td>
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<td>30.5% of people who were convicted of crimes.</td>
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<td>34.5% of people who were convicted of felonies.</td>
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<td>43.5% of people who were convicted of felonies.</td>
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Becoming Fully Free

We recommend a bold transformation of the laws and systems in Illinois to provide people who have been involved in the criminal legal system an opportunity to fully participate in society and be free for the first time in history!

We believe that to accomplish this bold transformation, we will need bold legislative and/or administrative actions that repeal or amend the current laws that impact so many Illinoisans.

Overview

FULLY FREE is the campaign to end legal penalties that create long-lasting, often permanent, barriers to employment, housing, education, civil engagement for people arrested or convicted of crimes. Our most recent publication, “Never Fully Free: The Scale and Impact of Permanent Punishments” (2020), reveals that an estimated 3.3 million adults have been arrested or convicted of a crime in Illinois since the advent of mass incarceration in 1979. For these millions and countless others, we want them to be FULLY FREE to access resources that contribute to human flourishing.

The climate of the nation and Illinois has changed. People like me, people who have been involved in the criminal legal system, must be the drivers of change.” — Willette Benford, Board Chair Fully Free

Join our Press Conference with
Asm. Miguel Santiago (AB990 author) and Sen. Maria Elena Durazo
Mon., August 9, 8:30am, Los Angeles
Spring Street Courthouse, 312 N. Spring St.
RSVP: bit.ly/RVP-AB990PressC

YOU CAN VOTE whether you are on parole or supervision!
Register online at www.registertovote.ca.gov/
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Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956)