

Our All of Us or None newspaper serves to link those of us who have been locked up, those who are locked up, as well as our families and allies in this struggle.



ALL OF US OR NONE

NEWSPAPER

We want to ensure that the voices of our people inside are heard and the inside artists are recognized for their contributions to this movement.

Your stories matter!

JAN 2024



Mia shows off the card she made for her mother thanking her for her new bike. Photo by Steve Thomasberger

Spreading Joy Pedal by Pedal

The 24th Annual Community Giveback Gifts Bikes to children on behalf of their incarcerated loved one.

by TaSin Sabir, LSPC Communications Manager and AOUON Editor in Chief

Why do we persist in giving away bicycles for 24 years to children of incarcerated loved ones? The answer lies in the profound impact on these children, emphasizing the importance of knowing their loved ones are responsible for the gift. It's an opportunity for the entire community to unite, both inside and out, with a singular purpose—to uplift a child. The future of humanity depends on the collective effort invested in these moments of joy, and as a mother of three, I understand that a child's smile is the true currency of our endeavors.

Parents, loved ones, caretaker, whatever title one holds, the reward is universal, the spread of joy on a child's face. As life's realities momentarily pause, there's an exhale of relief, knowing that these moments have been orchestrated for them. The act of uplifting our youth is not just altruistic; it's a self interest pursuit for our own benefit—a step towards creating a safer, kinder world and a means to heal our collective past traumas.

On Saturday, December 9, 2023, the community gathered, meticulously lining up 297 bikes and toys. Teddy bears adorned in AOUON shirts were stacked on tables, alongside pens, markers, crayons, papers, to be used to write thank you cards to their loved ones inside.



Photo by TaSin Sabir

Dr. Tanisha Cannon, LSPC Managing Director, displayed the prowess of a conductor orchestrating hundreds of families and volunteers with the composure of a master musician. Trained not only with experience but also driven by passion for the cause, she encapsulates the bright future of leaders with lived experiences and a solid connection to their community.

In the words of Tanisha, "The future is bright, and this is what it looks like." Her reflection on the

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'Art helped save my life'



Original artwork by Donald Diggs.

This story was first published by AfroLA, nonprofit solutions journalism for Los Angeles told through the lens of the Black community.

AFRO LA.

by Eliza Partika, AfroLA

Jessie Milo knew art had found him as a little boy. On his rides with his mom to the Methadone clinic, his mother would throw him art magazines to read in the backseat while she went inside. Amidst scenes of drugs and gangs, art was there while his mother waited in line for her dose. Colorful patterns and flowers emerged from her highs when she took heroin, and his father would send him drawings from prison. Both his parents helped him fall in love.

He began trying to draw in earnest when he was 10 or 11 years old. When his father got out of prison, he sat down to teach him drawing techniques. At 14, in juvenile hall, Milo drew pictures to impress his future son's mother. She loved them, and he just wanted to make her smile. Art was an escape for Milo, to take his mind off things, a way to create, to bring joy.

"Art helped save my life. Coming to prison with a life sentence was a weird mixture of wanting to die and live at the same time," said Milo.

For incarcerated artists like 44-year-old Milo—who sports a neatly trimmed goatee, short haircut and sleeve tattoos—art is not just a way to reintegrate into society, or a way to pass time. It is a filter through which attitudes about a situation can change. It's a survival mechanism.

He remembers arriving at North Kern State Prison in shackles on the prison bus:

"The officers unshackled us and had us line up next to the bus, and said, 'Take off all your clothes and your shoes and throw them in the bin on the way in.' I can still feel the gravel beneath my bare feet as we walked naked in the sun into the processing area, where we then lined up naked in a holding cell. This was prison reception. When I got to my destination prison where I would serve my time, we were locked in the cell days and months on end. We couldn't seek mental health treatment because the prison gangs determined that was weakness, and they would stab you. So to cope, I started to draw sitting on my bunk."

Years later, as he got out of gangs, Milo began counseling and attended mental health and behavioral theory classes where art served as a "safe space to meditate and change," he said.

"I would draw and replay all I was learning and question my beliefs. Changing is uncomfortable, but art helped me through it all. Art is more than just a coping skill. It's proof that I have value, that I can bring joy instead of pain. I let go of the walls I built and the shame. I learned to love myself again, if not for the first time. What people do to us as children is

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NEWSPAPER

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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 prison industrial complex. Through our grassroots organizing, we are building a powerful political movement to win full restoration of our human and civil rights.

www.prisonerswithchildren.org



AOUON Editor in Chief: TaSin Sabir
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SELF DETERMINATION PLEDGE

**As members of All of Us or None,
we pledge:**

**To demand 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**

Mailbag

Transcommunalty

by Amos Stevenson
CTF Soledad, CA

You in your emotions, I see
but that aint no element of transcommunalty
sit back, listen to me,
share principles from Dr. Childs ancestry

1. Words and deed from my vein I bleed,
now that's the first element on the page I read
not just words about peace!
But standing up for your beliefs.
Cheap is talk, talk is cheap! If we ain't practicing
what we teach!
Living life, my life was off the hook,
2. Task focused outlook, is what it took, for me,
to get my life, back on the hook. Immediate, short
term, long term goals, is the story of how my life
grows
3. Shared practical action!!!! Now that's where
the real cooperative work is begun common
experience developed through work,
in doing so, we learn what does and does not!
Work shedding stereotypes & generalizations,
increases effective cooperation.
Hold up! Wait a minute,
4. Constructive disputin, my head a spinnin
positive growth based on honesty, helps us learn
more about you & me ways of thinkin and livin,
exposing conflicts otherwise forever hidden bringing

problems to light, so they can be addressed
maaaan this element is a positive process
leading to

5. interpersonal relations, we learn what we each
can become
common experience. building trust, a key element
in the diversity of each one of us. Coming to respect
each others difference, the love of humanity, I can't
resist.

One begins to think differently, as

6. personal transformation, takes place in me
mutual respect plus diversity, equals resistance and
freedom for all community relationship/friendships!
develop into

7. Creation of trancommunal associates
based on trust is a must, reinforcing communication
for all of us

8. Practical vision, now we see, these elements
internalize, motivate me
to endure the mundane of the achievable light, now
our shared visions look so bright

9. Engaged/disengaged, peace warriors, our life's
live a new page
the flexibility of transcommunalty, loving you and
your autonomy.



During a war long, long ago...

Mark G.
AOUON Member

During a war long, long ago
After I had faced myself and who we are
After I had risen in the streets to say no to that war
and white supremacy

After I found myself sitting in a chair
hands cuffed behind
being interrogated by six of Chicago's finest

After I was snatched from that chair, flung through
the air
cop on each arm
open window and sky
back in that chair, heart pounding real hard.

After all that
I found myself in Everton, IL.
Home of North Western University
Far north suburban side of Chicago not a penny in
my pocket - needing to be in court at 9am.
Far away south side of Chicago

Assault on a police officer the charge on me

Not a penny in my pocket, no money to pay my way

Step out the door to the pre-dawn winter day
It's cold outside y'all
Deep snow crunches under feet
The hawk blown off lake Michigan like a 50 foot
razor blade
Not bothering to take names just cutting chill to the
bone

Not a penny in my pocket
No money to pay my way

Headed for the CTA station, catch the elevated train
and subway to court
Plan to panhandle
Ask for spare change to pay my way

Excuse me sir, do you have any spare change for the
train?

Dirty looks from men
How dare I ask

Not a penny in my pocket
No money to pay my way

Excuse me ma'am, do you have any spare change
for the train?
Women clutch their coats and themselves tighter
Scurry away into the wind

Not a penny in my pocket
No money to pay my way

Hour and a half later, feet, hands cold, snot running
from nose
frozen

Can't be late for court
Feeling the weight of the stall

Not a penny in my pocket
No money to pay my way

Then, then if there had been a sound track the
orchestra would have struck it up then

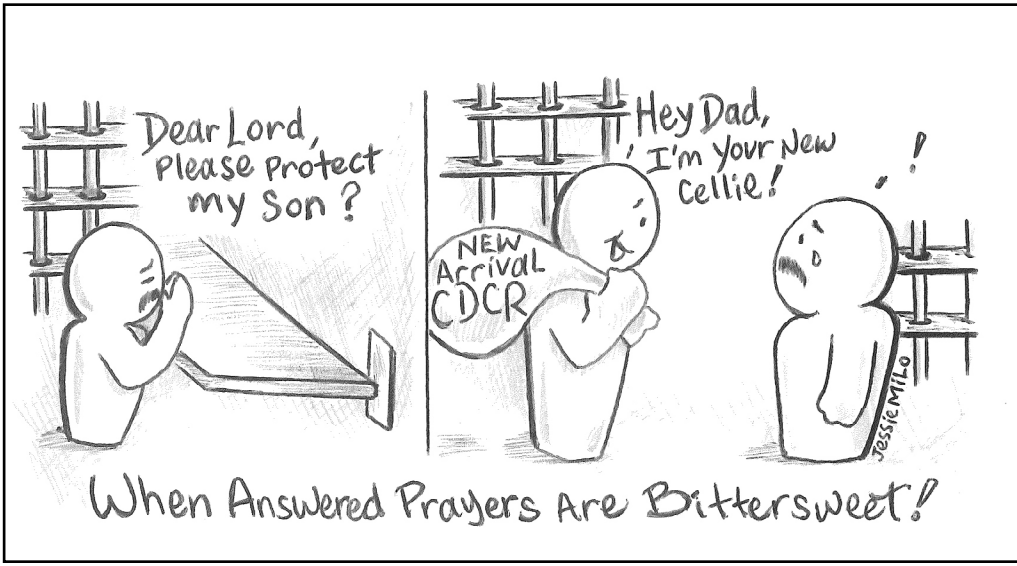
Excuse me sir, do you have any spare change for the
train?

Not a penny in my pocket
No money to pay my way

He smiles on that cold windy winter morn
Opens his gloved hand full of change
"Take what you need," says he.

Money in my pocket enough to pay my way
Can't be late
Won't be late

Still feeling the weight of the state



Original comic by Jessie Milo



Original comic by Jessie Milo

‘Art helped save my life’ (Continued from page 1)

not our fault,” Milo said.

For Donald Diggs, art was a way of processing the world around him after being released from Salinas Valley State Prison in 2022, where he had been incarcerated for 20 years. Post-release, he moved to a shelter and then a small studio apartment in Oakland, where he now takes classes at Laney College.

Diggs was incarcerated in late 1979. Ceramicists, artists, painters, woodworkers, poets and filmmakers from across the state came to his prison. Their classes were part of the William James Foundation Arts and Corrections Program’s collaboration with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. One day, Diggs decided to try his hand at it. He’d always appreciated art, but he never thought he could paint.

“It wasn’t just drawing, it was ceramics, clay. So I [had] a little exposure to different things. We get a lot of lockdown cell time so they would give us pencil, paper, pads, and I just started doodling or trying to copy something I see,” said Diggs. “That’s how I started to draw, that’s how I worked into a technique, by watching everybody else and learning on my own.”

As Diggs’s art developed, so did he. He developed his own style, cutting pieces of paper into shapes and using wax to bring out colors and baby oil to set and smear color on his canvas. Art made Diggs “feel himself again.” And, he kept learning to hone his mixed-media style from the creative ways he saw others in his program experiment with what materials they could find.

His first time in the Emeryville Blick art store in February 2022, Diggs carefully selected the materials he needed; he didn’t have much money to spend yet. He fell in love with bristol board for the way it absorbs the baby oil and wax he still uses to mix

colors. He gathered colored paper and colored pencils for drawing figures. His latest purchase, a set of five X-Acto knives, will allow him to shape paper figures more precisely and quickly make copies he stacks on top of one another to create a three-dimensional effect. As he gathers materials, he said he gathers

Diggs wrote in a message to AfroLA.

During the pandemic, Milo’s parents got sick, he lost a cousin to suicide and his uncle was murdered by his nephew the same day his grandmother died. Amidst what seemed like insurmountable loss, Milo turned to drawing comics about his and other inmates’ struggles while incarcerated.

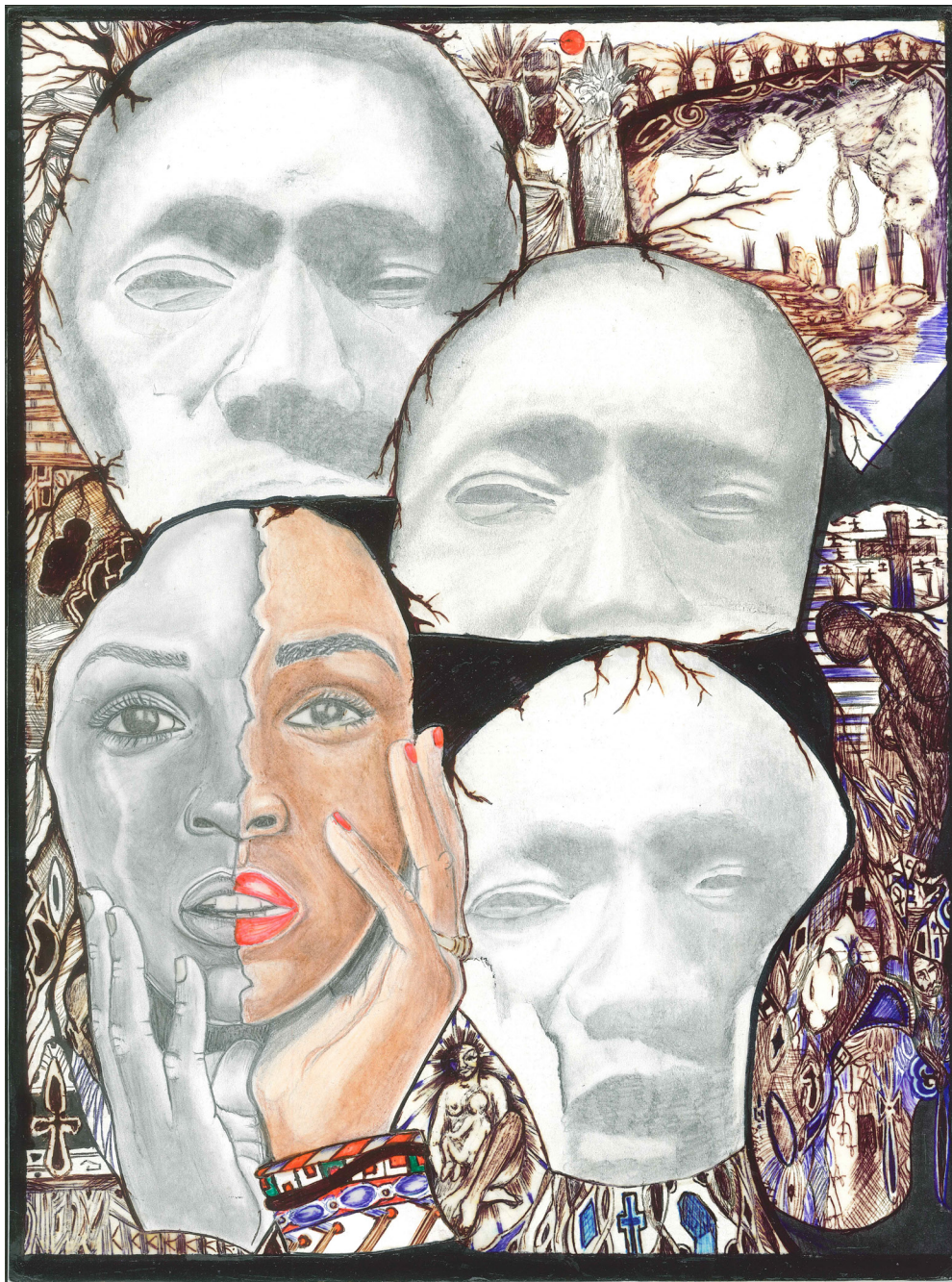
“Comic art is stress free and is a great way to have a voice! That’s important because we all need to be heard,” said Milo.

A commentary on prison canteen markups in addition to his personal art and drawing comics for both San Quentin News and the All of Us or None Newspaper, Milo works as a youth mentor and is a freelance journalist. “I feel a duty to participate in the conversation,” he said.

Art from both Milo and Diggs has appeared in the All of Us or None Newspaper, a work of the non-profit organization Legal Services for Prisoners with Children. Editor-in-chief TaSin Sabir said publishing the All of Us or None Newspaper is a way to ensuring that talented artists are uplifted, encouraged and supported.

“It is important to our organization that incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people be heard in their own voices as writers, authors, poets and artists,” said Sabir.

“Even people not in San Quentin prison might feel like they live in a cage and are invisible, and they just want someone to see them,” said Milo. “Through my art or poetry or writing the world knows I’m alive, and that makes me feel alive.”



Original artwork by Donald Diggs.

inspiration and excitement for what is possible.

Diggs, towering nearly 6 feet tall, likes to take walks on Laney’s campus and observe the trees twisting different directions, the ornate patterns on the wood. He marvels at how much things have changed in the 43 years he was behind bars. Change, and the trees, are inspirations for his next project.

“I once believed I’d be confined behind bars for the rest of my life, but now I sense a profound renewal within me. The world has undergone significant transformations, constantly evolving. Although things have shifted, there’s an intriguing constancy amidst the change. Observing this aspect is what makes this experience so captivating and intriguing to me,”



Original artwork by Donald Diggs.



Photos by Mitra Zarinebaf

Reclaiming Home

Celebrating Freedom at AOUON's Welcome Home Dinner

by Mitra Zarinebaf,
LSPC Communications Associate

Everyone has a unique definition of home—it is a personal relationship with a place that provides comfort, belonging, rest, safety, and acceptance. It can be brimming with your closest relationships, or a space to unwind and understand yourself. Often, it is both. Above all though, to be at home is to feel loved and at peace; to know that this is where you can truly be and act yourself.

Unfortunately, the carceral system has no regard for any of these necessary traits, where prisons and jails disrupt community, personal spaces, and rest. Almost always, people incarcerated have to adjust their meanings of home because they are forced to be geographically distant from where they felt belonging into a brutal confinement where they have to find home out of cruel circumstances. It is truly the persistent will of humans finding opportunities to form community in the most dire of circumstances that allow for traces of home in carceral spaces.

When we at LSPC and AOUON say “welcome home!” to our community members recently released from prisons and jails, we are critically emphasizing that this—to be outside of the carceral system—is home. While everyone will have their own complicated and personal journey once they are released, we still honor and celebrate this massive achievement. Every year, we host a Welcome Home Dinner at the Freedom and Movement Center. This year, we held it on Friday, December 15th and hosted 24 people who were released in 2023. Our purpose is to celebrate and shower our guests with the love, care, and acceptance they deserve after being incarcerated, while also providing resources and guidance.

The night began with a delicious feast of soul food, a plentiful and flavorful contrast from what is served inside. People ate and introduced themselves to each other; soon after, a series of

speakers started, starting with AOUON member Mark G. reciting the incredible and iconic All of Us or None poem by Bertolt Brecht. What a powerful way to begin! Before he recited the poem, Mark G. reminded everyone that “we are in a room full of dragons,” alluding to Ho Chi Minh’s famous quote, “when the prison doors are opened, the real dragon will fly out!” We then heard from spiritual and religious leaders, such as a formerly incarcerated pastor and Imam/Chaplain Bilal Int’l Mustafa from Alameda County. The running theme appearing in their words was the importance of life, especially for Black and Brown people. Afterwards, we listened to our LSPC formerly incarcerated staff and our Executive Director Dorsey Nunn. Dorsey emphasized why we continue to do this work in the first place, exclaiming that he “can only have so much freedom if you all aren’t free.” In other words, he is signifying that this work must include the freedom of all of us if we are working towards abolition and collective liberation. No one gets left behind.

This was undoubtedly a powerful night. After we had bonded, listened to inspiring speakers, and shared resources for people getting back on their feet, we took a chance to hear everyone introduce themselves and announce how many years they were incarcerated. As everyone went around, the numbers continued to stack up. 12, 24, 38 years, it continued on and on. Finally, we added up that there were 871 years of incarceration, an unbelievable number of years lost to the prison industrial complex.

We ended the dinner with a message that formerly incarcerated individuals are welcome at the Freedom and Movement Center, either to visit, request resources, or make their voices heard in our politics.

Every year, this dinner marks a beginning. Our community members have returned to a life of freedom, and we are excited to welcome them back and let them know we’ll always be here for them on their journey.



Spreading Joy Pedal by Pedal

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importance of making connections with loved ones resonates, emphasizing the significance of these relationships.

As families entered the gym, graciously donated by McClymonds High School in West Oakland, CA, you could see the excitement in everyone's eyes. Over 100 families were welcomed and escorted through the different stations with the assistance of community volunteers, staff, and All of Us or None members. The love overflowed, and not a detail was missed. Each child was fitted for a helmet, encouraged to spend time drawing or writing cards to their loved ones who gifted them the bike, as well as enjoying face painting, balloon art, family portraits, and food. Finally, when the moment arrived to be presented with their bike, the children were all smiles as they rode their new bikes around McClymonds's parking lot before staff helped load the new bicycle onto the caretaker's car.



Photo by Steve Thomasberger

do we hold the space for the people in prison? As a result, we don't ever tell the children that for the most part the bikes come from us. We tell them the bikes come from their parents or loved ones. There's a real good reason for doing that because we don't want them to be grateful to us; we want them to be grateful to their parents and that relationship." Says Dorsey.

This year, Dorsey, usually the one at the mic, instead sat with the families and asked them how they heard about the Community Giveback. Dorsey was pleased to hear that they heard about it from family members inside.

At one point, All of Us or None members donated \$50 towards a new bike, as well as LSPC staff donating at least \$50 towards a bike. Today with the growth of the organization LSPC is able to purchase bikes from fundraising efforts and donors.

How did we get here? Twenty-four years ago, it started when a bike repair shop in San Quentin received excess bikes and wanted to donate them to All of Us or None. Initially, the event was named the Big Bike Giveaway, with the goal of giving away one bike every five minutes. Dorsey Nunn, Executive Director of LSPC, recalls that one of the first Bike Giveaways was held in the Acorn Projects of West Oakland because it was important to see how many people in the community were missing and, through the gift of a bike, help incarcerated impacted families maintain a relationship.

Dorsey knows firsthand the impact of incarceration on a parent. Having missed valuable time with his children, he can affirm that, "My daughter had more to do with my rehabilitation than anybody else in the world." He goes on to say that his daughter, described by him as organized, would hold him accountable and make him commit to future goals, such as him returning home to walk her down the aisle.

"I recognize the importance of children in our lives and I recognize the importance of families. The Community Giveback is actually a reflection of how

In Dorsey's upcoming book, *What Kind of Bird Can't Fly*, he reflects on his childhood and recounts a poignant memory of receiving his first bicycle for Christmas, only to be accused of stealing it, leading to its confiscation by the police.

"The police and my surroundings, before they told me all the things that I could be, demonstrated that I was a thug and a suspect. Before they encouraged me to aspire to become like Willie Mays or pursue a career as a doctor or anything else," he emphasizes.

In essence, Dorsey's ongoing effort is dedicated to ensuring that children do not associate their first bicycles with theft but rather understand that their parents generously provided them.

Dorsey's narrative serves as a poignant reminder of the challenges he faced and the resilience he developed against the backdrop of systemic racism. The exploration of these early encounters with law enforcement becomes a profound part of the larger narrative on the transformative power of compassion, unity, and the unwavering commitment to nurturing hope, one bicycle at a time.



Photo by TaSin Sabir

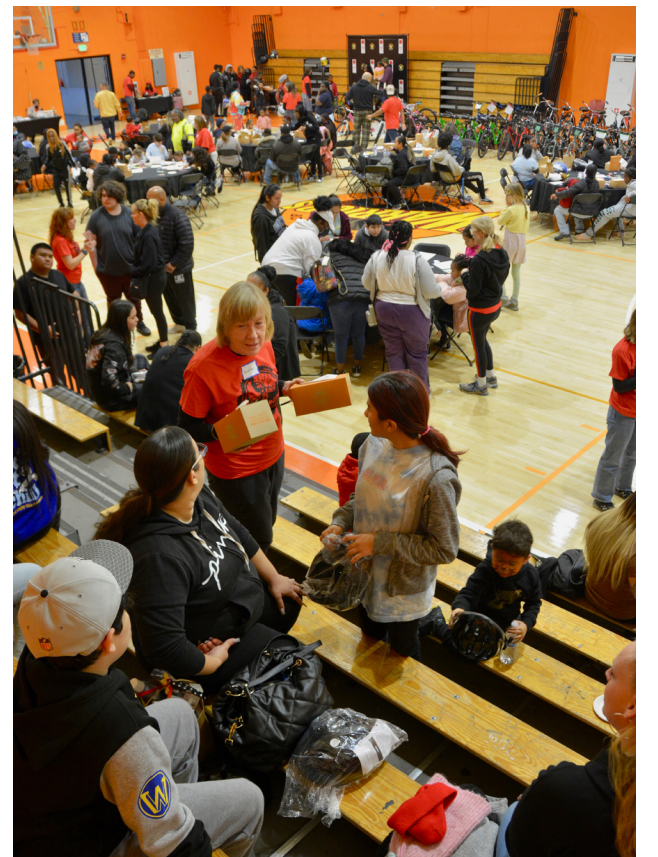


Photo by Steve Thomasberger



Photo by Steve Thomasberger



Photo by Scott Braley

A Look Back at 2023



507 People at Quest for Democracy



7 People Freed from CDCR



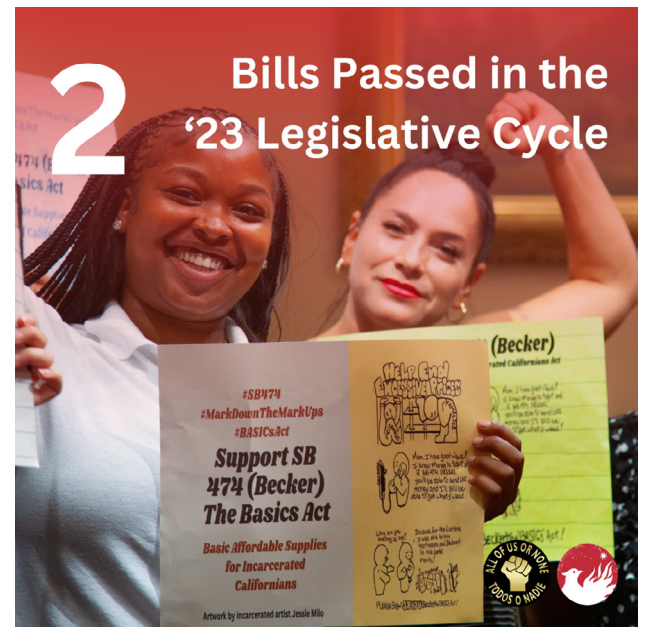
50 Advocacy Visits to The Capitol



50 Advocacy Visits to The Capitol



8 Bills Going Into the 24' Legislative Cycle



2 Bills Passed in the '23 Legislative Cycle

Legal Corner - The Changing Landscape of Felony Murder



by Kellie Walters, JD, LLM, LSPC Staff Attorney

This article is the third in a series concerning the changes in Felony Murder in California. The previous articles have discussed the recent changes in California law and the court rulings that have provided clarity on how the court should apply the rule in light of recent statutory changes.¹ Here, we will consider the potential far-reaching consequences reflecting and influencing societal attitudes towards justice, equity, and the legal system's role in addressing crime and punishment.

These changes in the statutory scheme may have significant implications for individuals and the legal system.²

Changes to the felony murder rule could improve the efficiency of the legal system by focusing on the intent and actual actions of the defendants, which would prevent unnecessary and prolonged trials for those individuals whose connection to the murder charge is tangential. Alterations in the felony murder law could set new legal precedents, influencing how lawyers approach defense strategies, how prosecutors charge individuals in complex criminal cases, and provide an opportunity for more restorative forms of justice, focusing on rehabilitation rather than punitive measures.

One of the primary criticisms of the felony murder rule is that it can lead to disproportionately harsh

sentences for individuals who did not intend to kill or were only peripherally involved in a crime. As a result of reforming this rule, there could be a greater degree of equity in sentencing, ensuring that the punishment is more closely aligned with an individual's level of criminal responsibility. Those involved in felonies that have resulted in death may find that the law reassesses their situation and may be allowed to explore the possibility of lesser charges because of the new laws. This could particularly affect those who have not been involved with the direct perpetration of the lethal act but have been involved with the charged crime, nonetheless.

The felony murder rule was initially designed to penalize accomplices in serious crimes, applying the concept of transferred intent.³ But its application has resulted in excessively harsh sentences, disproportionately affecting black and brown communities. Considering the felony murder rule's well-documented disproportionate impact on young people, particularly those from minority communities, reforms could potentially play a significant role in advancing broader social and racial justice objectives.⁴ It could address aspects of the criminal justice system that have been criticized for perpetuating inequality. These reforms could positively influence public perceptions of the criminal justice system, fostering a sense of fairness and justice in communities.

Additionally, for the families of victims, changes in the felony murder rule might mean a shift in how justice is served. By reducing the unwarranted

sentencing associated with felony murder, the likelihood and length of time that families are separated is lessened, diminishing the significant financial and emotional burdens on the families of incarcerated individuals.

The proposed changes can create a ripple effect in the legal community, reflecting a shift in public perception of the criminal justice system. This could serve as a catalyst for further legal reforms and advocacy work, as activists and legal reformers may be inspired to push for additional changes that align with evolving attitudes toward justice and fairness. By galvanizing support from individuals and organizations, these efforts could lead to a more equitable and effective criminal justice system that better serves the needs of society as a whole.

1. There remains a federal felony murder charge that applies to individuals in California that has not been amended in the same manner as the state statute.

2. This article should not be considered legal advice, but only informative.

3. Transferred intent means that when a person intends to commit a crime against one person but ends up committing it against another person by accident, their intent can be transferred to the actual victim, making them criminally liable for the harm inflicted on the bystander.

4. Cohen, G. Ben and Levinson, Justin D. and Hioki, Koichi, Racial Bias, Accomplice Liability, and the Felony Murder Rule: A National Empirical Study (February 6, 2023). Denver Law Review, Forthcoming, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4411658>

Jesse's Corner

by Jesse Burlison LSPC/AOUON In-Custody Program Coordinator

The Connection Between Slavery, Mass Incarceration, And The Prison Industrial Complex

In 1865, the United States government enforced upon its citizens the abolishment of slavery as a private practice, adding an Amendment to its Federal Constitution. The abolishment was codified and expressed in the 13th Amendment which enacted a prohibition against the practice of slavery by private citizens, who before were previously permitted to claim ownership of fellow human beings as their private property and count those same persons as assets within their private holdings and estates. The 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution ended the practice of private ownership of fellow human beings as personal property. No longer can one person own another as their private property.

In 1865, the country also was reformed into a segregated society where the former slave population lived separate from the former slave owner population. Thus, there were Black territories and white territories. Likewise, there were black jails and white jails as everything was segregated between the two. This period of segregation lasted approximately 100 years until 1965 and the passage of the Civil Rights Act. But it was during the segregation period when mass incarceration began, and our modern-day prison system, The Prison Industrial Complex, was developed.

Most students of U.S. History are familiar with the Black Codes, Jim Crow Laws, and the usage of Chain Gangs in the segregated South. However, there is often a huge disconnect with exactly how our present-day criminal justice system of mass incarceration and the prison industrial complex is the direct consequence and manifestation of the very same racist philosophy that sought to keep Black people in slavery and fought against its abolishment in the Civil War.

After the Civil War, the former slave owners were compensated, meaning they received Reparations

as compensation for their loss of assets because of losing their slaves. Meanwhile, the former slave handlers were also let go by the slave owners, meaning slave handlers had lost their jobs because of the slave owners losing their slaves and no longer having a need to keep them hired on. So, the loss of slaves also meant the loss of jobs for slave handlers and an increase in unemployment amongst the white population who relied on slavery as an industry.

The way the government solved the unemployment problem for the former slave handler population was to take control over the slave industry it had just abolished. It accomplished this by creating a new law and adding it as an EXCEPTION CLAUSE to the 13th Amendment prohibition of slavery. Thus, the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution provides:

The new slaves, however, did not exist but needed to be produced, meaning they had to come from some place. And the 13th Amendment provided the legal means by which a slave could be produced, that is, by which a free man could be returned to slavery.

"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."

This was the law that gave rise to the new modern-day slave industry operated by the U.S. government referred to as the Prison Industrial Complex. The EXCEPTION CLAUSE made it lawful for the government to preserve the institution of slavery by allowing it to be practiced exclusively under the authority of Government. Thus, the United States Government passed a law that reserved its right to maintain the practice of slavery under the legal authority of the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Former slave handlers were able to apply and work for the government and continue their careers in the slave industry as slave handlers. Black Codes and Jim Crow Laws were equally designed to funnel

former slaves into the prisons through the Court system to provide bodies for the new government-run slave industry; i.e., prisons. The new slaves, however, did not exist but needed to be produced, meaning they had to come from some place. And the 13th Amendment provided the legal means by which a slave could be produced, that is, by which a free man could be returned to slavery.

At that time prisons were segregated so Blacks were housed and treated differently than whites who went to prison. Blacks who were incarcerated had no rights and were subjected to the same treatment they had been treated with before the Civil War. Meanwhile, the prison system became an industry

by which some white men could find jobs and enjoy careers. The industry was also profitable for the government as well, making the continuous flow of fresh bodies into the system an economic necessity. As a result, the government expanded policing operations into Black territories to continue a supply of bodies for the prison industry.

The court system has become the vehicle by which new slaves are produced: "Neither

slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted..."

In 1965, the Civil Rights Act was passed along with other related laws which resulted in desegregation of all public places, including jails and prisons. By this time, the practice of slavery within prisons had become a standard and was normalized in the minds of all except for those who were being subjected to it. Blacks, whites, and everyone in between were now a part of the new Prison Industrial Complex. And although the workforce inside the prison system has become integrated, the customs, practices, and culture remain the same. Prisoners are still treated like subclass humans; the only difference now is that they are considered slaves of the state or federal government rather than privately owned.



Mailbag

by Stephan Greel,
San Quentin, CA

My name is Stephen Greel I am a 39 year old male currently housed at San Quentin State Prison. I have been incarcerated for 19 years in the California Department of Corrections. I have worked several jobs with little or no pay and have been asked to do things that have endangered myself and others.

In 2009 while housed in Mule Creek State Prison I was made to clean up a cell in which a man had lit a fire. I was not given any personal protective equipment (PPE) except gloves. The cell had layers of soot from a melted television and the material

this man had used to start the fire. I was also asked to assist Enhanced Outpatient Program (EOP) incarcerated people in the cleaning of the cells.

In 2016 through 2018 while housed at Corcoran State Prison I had to work as a porter. I say had to because refusing to work constitutes a prison failure and results in disciplinary action.

The officer overseeing my work would throw bars of soap at the porters while we passed out supplies. As a porter we had to clean up pepper spray, blood, pepper bombs and fecal matter on a regular basis.

In 2021 through 2022 while housed at Sierra

Conservation Center I was assigned as a porter/clerk.

I worked for an entire year with no days off. I was required to feed the incarcerated people that were quarantined. I was required to feed "Active" incarcerated people who were already declaring their intent to attack me and my coworkers. I was engaged in two altercations and in one I was pepper sprayed. I also contacted Covid-19 after feeding the quarantined incarcerated people.

These are a few examples of my experience in CDCR with the current ineffective policy of forced inmate labor.



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 our lot can't better.
 Either gun or fetter.
 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 ones can feed you.
 Everything or nothing. All of us or none.
 One alone her lot can't better.
 Either gun or fetter.
 Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

Beaten one, who shall avenge you?
 You, on whom the blows are falling,
 Hear your wounded comrades 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 fetter.
 Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

Who, oh wretched one, shall dare it?
 We who can no longer bear it.
 Counts the blows that arm our spirit.
 Taught the time by need and sorrow,
 Strikes today and not tomorrow.
 Everything or nothing. All of us or none.
 One alone our lot can't better.
 Either gun or fetter.
 Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956)

AOUON is a grassroots organizing project of Legal Services for Prisoners with Children (LSPC) fighting to restore the civil and human rights of formerly and currently incarcerated people and our families. Started in California in 2003, AOUON currently has chapters all over the country advocating effectively to Ban the Box, restore voting rights, increase access to housing and education, and end mass incarceration. We demand a voice in building healthy communities.

LSPC organizes communities impacted by the criminal justice system and advocates to release incarcerated people, to restore human and civil rights, and to reunify families and communities. We build public awareness of structural racism in policing, the courts, and prison system, and we advance racial and gender justice in all our work. Our strategies include legal support, trainings, advocacy, public education, grassroots mobilization, and developing community partnerships.



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All of Us or None Membership Form | Yes, I want to become a member of ALL OF US OR NONE!

Name & Number: _____

Institution: _____

Address: _____

Country of Origin: _____

Do you have children? YES / NO. Do you need support with family issues? YES / NO

Earliest Parole/Release Date: _____ County of Parole/Probation: _____

- I can organize & facilitate group meeting
- I can help with membership outreach
- I can distribute materials & resources
- I can address & pass along feedback

Mail this form & any questions to:
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