

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!

APRIL 2024



(l-r) Paul Briley and Dorsey Nunn. Photo by TaSin Sabir



## The Prison Professor

Leo Hylton is on a mission to teach away incarceration, one Zoom at a time.

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

**AFRO LA.**

by Mother Jones

Story by Abigail Glasgow

This story first appeared on Mother Jones.

## LSPC welcomes Paul Briley as new Executive Director

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

Legal Services for Prisoners with Children (LSPC) is proud to announce the appointment of Paul Briley as the new Executive Director.

Paul, currently serving as Deputy Director of LSPC, will succeed Dorsey Nunn, who is retiring from his position as Executive Director effective May 1, 2024.

George Galvis, Chair of the LSPC Board, expressed excitement about the transition, stating, "Dorsey Nunn has been one of our premiere leaders in the freedom struggle for advancing the rights and human dignity of formerly incarcerated people. I'm excited that we have selected a young, emerging, and Black formerly incarcerated successor to take up the baton. Paul has served as the Deputy Director and has already proven himself to be an innovator and thought leader. His appointment as Executive Director will ensure that LSPC & All of Us or None will have strong and consistent leadership that is rooted in where we come from and reflects our values for many more years to come."

In a statement, Hamdiya Cooks-Abdullah, LSPC Board Member and former LSPC Administrative Director for 20 years, welcomed Paul as the new Executive Director, saying, "Today marks the dawn of a new era of leadership at Legal Services for Prisoners with Children as we welcome our new Executive Director Paul. Paul has proven his commitment, innovative vision, unwavering dedication, and loyalty to the mission of LSPC. Let us all embrace his leadership and support his journey towards greater success and prosperity."

Paul brings a wealth of experience and dedication to his new role. Growing up in the Bayview-Hunters Point district of San Francisco, Paul faced firsthand the social challenges that afflict marginalized



Paul Briley. Photo by TaSin Sabir

communities. After being displaced by foster care, he encountered the juvenile court system, leading him to a path of deep engagement with issues of social justice.

Paul has spoken passionately about being the descendant of a Civil War veteran, seeing this opportunity as a continuation of his ancestors' work of abolishing slavery. His grounding in the values and political education he learned through Project Rebound and Berkeley Underground Scholars, combined with his personal experience of the juvenile system, ignited his engagement with social justice reform. Finally, receiving the Elder Freeman Policy Fellowship at LSPC in 2019, gave him a platform under his feet from which he could soar, culminating in his role in 2023 as Deputy Director of LSPC. Throughout his tenure, Paul has focused on addressing the systemic injustices facing formerly incarcerated individuals, particularly in areas such as fines, fees, and legal monetary sanctions.

In his 6.5-by-14-foot cell, Leo Hylton keeps an unopened cherry-flavored Hint seltzer. Since March 2022, he's held on to the bottle as a prized possession, a "touchstone" that he says helps remind him of "the visceral feel" of the first day he spent outside the Maine State Prison in 12 years.

Hylton left for work. He's a co-instructor with Colby College's anthropology department. Alongside tenured professor Catherine Besteman, this spring for the second year running, he'll teach via Zoom from inside the walls about abolition—the movement to end incarceration. According to a number of experts in prison education, Hylton is the first professor of his kind in the United States.

Last March, the prison approved an unprecedented chance for Hylton to meet his students in person on their campus. He left under armed guard, wearing a freshly pressed blue button-down shirt and jeans—and handcuffs, belly chains, and hobbles that would clamp his legs if he tried to run.

"I'm going through this whole process of putting these restraints on, cheesing ear to ear," he remembers. Headed to Colby, he says, "I don't think I had felt more free in my life." In the classroom, Hylton—a large 32-year-old at 6.5 feet and 275 pounds, with a calming deep voice and a contagious laugh—and Besteman began, as they usually do, by instructing everyone to make a circle with their desks. Only this time, Hylton could hear chairs being dragged. As he saw his students speak, he registered their voices and their position in the room. The escort officers joined in, following instructions from their charge—not the other way around—moving furniture and taking part in the conversation he would lead.

This was all possible because Hylton has long-standing relationships with prison officials and staff, including Randall Liberty, who, as sheriff of Kennebec County, arrested Hylton 14 years ago. Now Maine's commissioner of corrections, he helped clear the way for Hylton's job at Colby despite countless policy hurdles. Liberty, Hylton wrote over email, "has seen me at my worst and is now supporting me in the realization of my best."

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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



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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

Transforming Advocacy:

The Ronald "Elder" Freeman Memorial Policy Fellowship

The Ronald "Elder" Freeman Memorial Policy Fellowship is a project of Legal Services for Prisoners with Children. Ronald "Elder" Freeman was a legendary revolutionary pillar in the Bay Area, a lifelong Freedom Fighter in the Black Liberation Struggle and an original member of the Southern California chapter of the Black Panther Party. This fellowship honors his work and legacy.

The fellowship offers a year-long opportunity for formerly incarcerated individuals to engage in grassroots organizing, legislative advocacy, and campaign strategies.

Our policy fellows advocate for releasing incarcerated people, reunifying families, and restoring human and civil rights through storytelling, public speaking, and social media campaigning. They engage with and empower their communities through grassroots organizing. Over the course of the year, our fellows develop the critical skills and experience necessary for a full-time position as an organizer or criminal justice advocate.

Meet our three 2024 policy fellows and read their reflections on policy reform as it relates to them on a personal level.

Reflection on AB 2709

by Robert Bowden, LSPC 2024 Ronald "Elder" Freeman Policy Fellow

As I reflect on the many years I spent incarcerated, a total of 16 years from the time I was 12 years old, makes me question what was it that got me through those days locked up? It was my faith and also my hope that someone I had reached out to would come and visit me. Early on I realized that a few moments talking to a loved one, even if it was behind glass, lifted the everyday darkness that I felt inside prison. Those few moments allowed me to endure many more days until they could return for another visit.

Visiting is a very important part of rehabilitation because it helps to hear a sincere voice when you are in a miserable environment. Visits help you to plan for your departure, to instill within you that one day this place will only be a memory, and that your current state is only temporary.

I'm honored to say today that I work for Legal Services for Prisoners with Children (LSPC). An organization that makes it a priority to fight for the human and civil rights of people directly impacted by incarceration. At LSPC we do legislative advocacy, opposing and supporting bills that one day can become law.

AB 2709 is a bill we co-sponsor and have been supporting. This bill would prevent the California Department of Correctional Rehabilitation (CDCR) from preventing someone from losing their visitation rights unless they have an infraction in the visiting room or something that pertains to visiting. As the law currently states, anything you do which violates CDCR rules can be held against you, and you can lose your visiting privilege, but

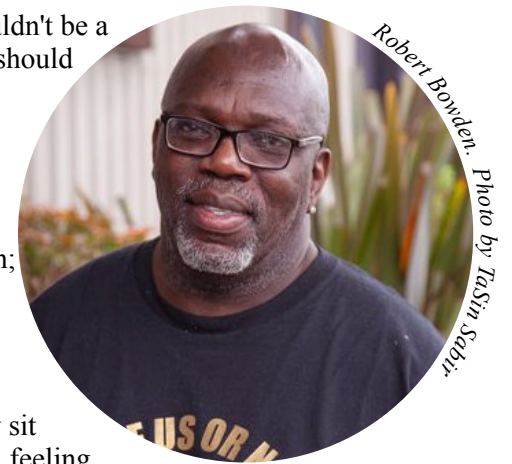
visiting shouldn't be a privilege; it should be a right.

Visiting is such a big part of your rehabilitation; not having visits can be devastating for one's mind as they sit incarcerated, feeling unloved and unwanted.

What makes AB 2709 such a good bill to support is that it addresses the strip search process that is done to children and women when they visit a loved one. This is often used as a vicious tool from correctional officers to target prisoners' girlfriends, wives, and children.

Lastly, can you imagine the trauma that is inflicted on a child who has to be stripped down just so they can visit their parent? Children of incarcerated parents already deal with separation, but for them to be degraded by having to be strip searched is inhumane. As a formerly incarcerated person and father I strongly advocate for this bill.

I remember my visits, and I remember seeing the children in the visiting room, some looking so lost and overwhelmed by the experience, all because they wanted to come visit their parent. Something needs to be done about this. Help LSPC advocate for the passing of AB 2709!



Robert Bowden. Photo by TaSin Sabir.

The End Slavery in CA Act

by Leena Piper, LSPC 2024 Ronald "Elder" Freeman Policy Fellow

As an Elder Ronald Freeman Policy Fellow at Legal Services for Prisoners with Children (LSPC), I actively participate in various collective social movement groups, such as the Fair Chance Housing in Alameda County, the Abolish Bondage Coalition, and Quest for Democracy.

Quest for Democracy organized by LSPC, is an annual statewide rally day at the CA State Capitol. The day is filled with legislative visits led by formerly incarcerated people. This opportunity for formerly incarcerated individuals to exercise constituency rights, advocate for bills, and participate in democracy is essential for ensuring our voices are heard in shaping legislative policies

that directly impact our lives.

During this years Quest for Democracy on April 29th, we will advocating for bill ACA 8, otherwise known as the "End Slavery in CA Act," introduced by Assemblymember Wilson.

ACA 8 aims to constitutionally ban slavery and



Leena Piper. Photo by TaSin Sabir.

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## The End Slavery in CA Act *(Continued from page 2)*

involuntary servitude in California, granting incarcerated workers the right to provide labor with formal consent within CDCR facilities. This bill seeks to eradicate modern-day slavery practices that exploit human labor.

During my time of incarceration, I was forced to work for at the Central California Women's Prison. I worked in the storage room in the Central Kitchen, where it was hot, smelly, and draining. We worked

8-hour shifts every day, forced to endure long hours and extreme labor conditions. We carried 50 lb bags of beans, heavy cans of tomato sauce, chickpeas, meat sauce, and more.

ACA 8 aims to provide Californians with the chance to vote on amending Article 1, Section 6 of the State Constitution. The proposed amendment seeks to outlaw involuntary servitude in California without any exceptions.

My personal experience being forced to work directly relates to this bill. ACA 8 would help promote better conditions and anti-recidivism methodologies and practices.

I am deeply committed to championing transformative policies and am honored to have been afforded the platform and resources through The Ronald "Elder" Freeman Memorial Policy Fellowship at LSPC.

## A Deeper Understanding

by Gilbert Murillo, LSPC 2024 Ronald "Elder" Freeman Policy Fellow

As a 2024 Elder Ronald Freeman Policy Fellow, I initially found myself overwhelmed by the deluge of information and demanding tasks, yet this experience ultimately deepened my understanding of my identity as a formerly incarcerated individual within the political and legislative sphere.

As a fellow I actively participate in Coalition for Family Unity and the Abolish Bondage Coalition.

This fellowship allows me to translate ideas into legislation, with a specific focus on dismantling injustices entrenched within the criminal justice system and the administrative regulatory practices of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR).

One significant piece of legislation I advocate for is AB 2959, sponsored by Liz Ortega, known as the "Incarcerated Family Support and Nutrition Act." This bill aims to lower vending machine prices

in CDCR prison visiting areas, thereby providing financial support to incarcerated individuals and their families, fostering better health, safety, and reintegration outcomes. By incentivizing healthier food choices and curbing price gouging, this initiative alleviates economic burdens on incarcerated individuals and their support networks.

Additionally, I've been involved in advocating for AB 2709, the "Family Unity Bill" proposed by Bonta, which underscores the importance of maintaining personal connections between prisoners and their loved ones. By streamlining administrative procedures and reducing systemic harm on families and children, this legislation promotes rehabilitative engagement and diminishes recidivism rates. Facilitating re-entry processes within the familial and communal support structures, rather than isolating individuals within a hostile environment, is essential for successful rehabilitation.

Furthermore, my involvement extends to supporting ACA 8, introduced by Wilson, dubbed the "End Slavery in CA Act," which aims to constitutionally ban involuntary servitude (another name for

slavery) in California. This amendment grants incarcerated workers the right to provide labor with formal consent within CDCR facilities. Crucially, this initiative seeks to eradicate modern-day slavery practices that exploit human labor under deplorable conditions, thereby fostering dignity and fairness within the incarcerated population.

My journey is a direct correlation between personal experiences with incarceration and the ongoing public policy endeavors aimed at enhancing better prison conditions and eliminating recidivism.

Together, we strive to build a fairer system where inequality becomes a relic of the past, ensuring lasting societal progress and equity for all.



# Uniting for Change and Empowerment

by Lawrence Cox, LSPC Interim CFU Coordinator and Regional Advocacy and Organizing Associate

The California AOUON chapters recently gathered in Los Angeles on March 9th to 10th for their annual statewide convening, a pivotal event where members discuss updates, refine organizing strategies, and strengthen connections among peers.

This year's gathering was nothing short of transformative, leaving attendees ecstatic, motivated, enlightened, and uplifted. It was a testament to our commitment to continue the mission, vision, and direction of our impactful grassroots organization. The convening was imperative in this endeavor, providing a platform to sustain and expand the profound legacy of All of Us or None.

Throughout the event, the rich history and grassroots organizing efforts of AOUON resonated deeply. Members had the opportunity to reflect on historic struggles and triumphs, reinforcing the common goals that bind us across generations.

One of the central themes of this year's convening was the cultivation of humanity, kinship, and solidarity, with a strong emphasis on our most potent



AOUON California members pose in Los Angeles during the AOUON Convening.

weapon: UNITY. In a world where we confront a calculated, racist, capitalistic, and oppressive system, our community and unity stand as our greatest assets.

Amidst the discussions and workshops, there were also moments of camaraderie and leisure. A notable highlight was the statewide night of bowling, where members engaged in spirited competition

and bonded over shared experiences. Additionally, attendees ventured to Compton for a charity event, supporting organizations that provide vital resources to individuals like ourselves.

However, the heart of the convening lay in the two days of intensive organizing training. These sessions were aimed at equipping chapters with the skills and knowledge necessary to support, empower, and heal our communities. From re-entry programs to organizing against systems of oppression, the training covered a range of critical topics essential for our advocacy work.

Furthermore, the convening provided a platform for chapters to focus on building, restructuring, and shaping the policy agenda for the upcoming year. This is crucial for a movement that seeks to challenge and transform the carceral system and our communities.

As we reflect on the statewide convening of AOUON, it is evident that it served as a re-establishment of our commitment to carry forward the legacy and history of our organization. It reaffirmed our dedication to dismantling systems of oppression and fostering healing and resilience within our communities. Looking ahead, we are excited about the possibilities and challenges that the future holds.

# I'M A CONVICTED PERSON AND I VOTE!



## DID YOU KNOW?

- There are only TWO states where you never lose your voting rights: Washington DC, Maine and Vermont.
- In 22 states voting rights are lost while in prison, but are automatically restored upon release—meaning you can vote while on parole!  
*California, Colorado, Connecticut, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Washington, Hawai'i, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, & Utah.*
- In 13 states, voting rights are lost while imprisoned, while on parole, and/or until fines, fees, and restitution are paid.  
*Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, & West Virginia*
- In 12 states, voting rights are lost indefinitely for certain convictions, require a Governor's pardon, and/or require a waiting period after completion of the sentence.  
*Alabama, Arizona, Delaware, Iowa, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, Tennessee, Virginia, Wisconsin, & Wyoming.*

## BUT CAN I VOTE?

If you have a felony conviction, the only time you cannot vote in California is if:

- You are currently serving a state or federal prison sentence.

**Your right to vote is automatically restored once you complete your sentence—just register to vote!**

A misdemeanor **NEVER** affects your right to vote.

Even if you are unhoused, you are still eligible to vote. Just list a cross street near where you usually stay as your residence; and ask a local community center or charitable organization if you can have election-related mail delivered to them on your behalf; or set up general delivery at a local post office.



Felony Disenfranchisement laws are a strategic avenue supported by special interest groups to continue the political marginalization of black and brown communities across this country. For generations, felon disenfranchisement laws have weakened the political power and suppressed the voices of Black and brown communities. ALL OF US OR NONE, the grassroots organizing project of LSPC, is on a mission to harness the collective power of our black and brown communities in an effort to regain our civil right to vote.

Over the last several years, legal and legislative victories have expanded the right to vote for people with criminal convictions in California. Many Californians can now vote even if they are serving a sentence for a felony, as long as they are not serving a prison term. Someone on probation, on post-release community supervision, mandatory supervision, or parole will be eligible if they otherwise meet the requirements to vote.



## VOTING RIGHTS TIMELINE

June 2020 — LSPC co-sponsored ACA 6; legislation was approved and brought voting rights for people on parole to the ballot.

November 2020 — Prop 17 was approved by voters and restored the right to vote for 50,000 Californians on parole.

October 2018 — LSPC & AOUON travel to the 2nd National FICPFM Conference in Orlando, FL to join 1000 fellow organizers to share strategies & successes, & to assist with outreach to pass Amendment 4.

October 2016 — LSPC & AOUON co-sponsor & helps pass AB 2466, which codifies the Scott et al v. Bowen decision, clarified that persons serving a felony jail sentence are eligible to vote

February 2014 — LSPC joined in filing Scott et al v. Bowen against the Sec. of State, arguing that people on post-release community supervision & mandatory supervision cannot be denied the right to vote.

March 2012 — All of Us or None v. Debra Bowen filed to challenge barring people sentenced to county jail or supervision for low-level felonies after realignment from voting. Courts denied our case without hearing.

August 2008 — AOUON holds a National Day of Action for Jail & Prison Voting Rights.

June 2008 — Sec. of State Debra Bowen ignores our request to meet to discuss guaranteeing the right of people in county jail to vote. We do an informational picket outside her Sacramento office. She meets with us.

August 2015 — Sec. of State Alex Padilla announces he withdraws the appeal in Scott et al v. Bowen, restoring voting rights to 60,000 formerly incarcerated Californians.

Spring 2003 — Formerly incarcerated leaders form All of Us or None and include Voting Rights as a top-three priority.

July 2004 — Secretary of State Kevin Shelley affirms that people in county jail for a felony & people on probation have the right to vote.

2004 — AOUON forms partnership with the ACLU, together poll county jails to determine the different voting practices throughout the state.

2005 — LSPC, the League of Women Voters, and the ACLU file a lawsuit against the CA Secretary of State, & WIN! McPherson vs. Davis clarifies that people in county jails for felonies, on probation, and off parole can all vote.

2007 — CA Supreme Court rules against LSPC & Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents' class-action lawsuit to extend voting rights to people on parole.

**LET'S KEEP MOVING!**

## WHAT YOU CAN DO:

### In the Community:

- Make sure people you know who are currently incarcerated know their voting rights—if they're in county jail, THEY CAN VOTE!
- Periodically check your county website to make sure you're still registered—some counties occasionally purge people with felony convictions from the voting rolls (by mistake or not)
- Volunteer with voting rights organizations, especially those led by people directly-impacted by the criminal justice system—we know the issues that need fixing AND how to do it!
- Hold elected officials accountable! Are they engaged in your community? Do they include formerly incarcerated people & family members in their events & advisory sessions? Remind them that they represent us, too!

### Currently on parole?

- Verify whether you are registered as a voter with your local Elections office or with the CA Secretary of State. If not, register! Also, check that you have a current address associated with your registration.

### Currently in Prison?

- Advise your friends & loved ones to register to vote!
- Encourage your friends & loved ones to go to the polls & vote!
- Educate your friends & loved ones about bills, propositions, & issues that affect all of you directly & indirectly. Create a voting guide for them!

### Currently in County Jail?

- Request Voter Registration forms and Voter Guides as soon as possible
- Educate & assist your cellie & others inside to register & vote!
- Write to your elected representative to support your issues!

## The Prison Professor (Continued from page 1)

Hylton had an abusive father, and, at age 10, cold-called a social worker who ushered him into Maine's foster care system. When a family of Canadian nationals he had bonded with and hoped would adopt him failed to acquire citizenship, "that was it," he remembers. "It was just one separation too many." Soon after, Hylton was diagnosed with emotional detachment disorder and oppositional defiant disorder. "I did not have the capacity, the ability, or the language to be able to wrestle with all the emotion," he says, and his teen years were rife with disconnection and isolation. When he was 16, his latest foster mother had a fatal heart attack while he was on the line with 911. A year later, his biological father died of cancer. At 17, Hylton moved from the coastal town of Belfast to Augusta. Within a month, Hylton participated in a violent home invasion alongside an older foster brother, wielding a machete against a man and his 10-year-old daughter.

In county jail for 22 months, Hylton was placed in segregation, or "seg"—a version of solitary confinement—as his lawyer negotiated a plea deal. Hylton began taking classes, and in 2010, on the day he was sentenced to 50 years behind bars, received his GED.

Once inside, Hylton says he leaned into "the hustle," getting into fights and gaining "the reputation of someone unafraid of violence." But that reputation, alongside his trajectory, began to shift radically when he met Ephriam "E" Bennett, who was serving a 27-year sentence.

Bennett, a former prizefighter, career military man, and entrepreneur, was almost 30 years older than Hylton and saw potential in him. As an early act of mentorship, one day he dropped a stack of magazines in front of Hylton in the rec yard. "Here," Bennett said, "have something to read." From there, Bennett pushed him to take more courses and enroll in programs for music and creative writing. Hylton eventually got a bachelor's degree from the University of Maine, and, just last year, earned a master's in conflict analysis, with a concentration in social justice advocacy and activism from George Mason University.

Bennett also introduced Hylton to a Christian faith defined by, as Hylton puts it, "the Jesus of the Bible" with whom he could relate: "the callous-handed, darker-skinned, rough around the edges... Jesus, not the blond-haired, blue-eyed European Jesus." Hylton was accepted into the prison's internal hospice program, which aids people who are dying while incarcerated. He has since helped 17 men at the end of their lives, giving baths and keeping them company with stories and songs.

Hylton soon gained respect from fellow residents, staff, and administrators. When prison officials, in step with reformers pushing a reconsideration of solitary confinement, decided to close down the Maine State Prison's own seg ward, Hylton and a handful of fellow residents helped reenvision the space, and then worked together to remodel the cells where he had spent some of his earliest days in prison. Today it is a unit people earn their way into, with a sizable garden that grows food for both the prison's kitchen and outside donation, a library and study rooms, a prison dog grooming facility, and a gym. Besteman, who has taught at Colby for nearly three decades, says Hylton is "fundamental to the reason why that prison is no longer as violent."

Although Hylton is barred from making direct contact with the people he harmed, he has submitted a letter of apology for them to the state; further contact is their choice. He says he subscribes to a philosophy of restorative justice, the idea that rehabilitation happens not through serving time, but by repairing the harm one has caused. He sees his work at Colby, and as a writer, as steps to that end. Aside from running a weekly abolitionist-themed email newsletter, he's contributed around 30 columns to Mainer magazine, and published an autobiographical article about trauma and faith-based healing in the journal Religions. To Hylton, allowing people like him to teach "creates a means for us to... pay our debt to society."

"I am able to contribute to my community," Hylton says. "And that is one of the deepest, most transformative pieces of this teaching experience."

Besteman first met Hylton in the fall of 2021 while running a statewide arts and education project on ending incarceration. Hylton participated in several related programs, including by helping to gather peers at the prison to participate in a short film on abolition. Finding him to be a "fulcrum between the inside and outside," she arranged for him to speak at a Colby human rights lecture series held on Zoom during the pandemic. Afterward, Besteman put in a request to Colby's provost to let Hylton join her as a co-instructor. "I knew he would be a powerful teacher," she said, "extremely compelling and deeply interested in people."

Their time together offers the barest glimpse of an abolitionist future, when the punishment and separation underlying incarceration are supplanted by programs rooted in community building. A typical class has Hylton teleconferencing on a projected screen while Besteman and 14 students gather in person. They begin by all answering the same question, either simple ("If you were weather right now, what would you be?") or more challenging ("What are you leaving behind to come into class today?"). Students then collectively reflect on weekly readings covering police, prisons, surveillance, the United States' history of slavery and incarceration centers, and, ultimately, alternatives to such systems.

"It's one thing to just read an article about solitary confinement," says Halle Carroll, a Colby senior who took the class. "It's another thing to finish reading and hear Leo talk about his experience and the experience of others."

A month after he journeyed to Colby, all 14 of his students visited Hylton on the prison grounds. After giving them a tour of the facility, Hylton—unchained and free to hug them, unlike when he visited them on campus—took everyone to what he calls "his spot": the only hill that lets you see beyond the fence to take in the mountains. "We all stood there," Carroll recalls, "and shared a word to describe what this day meant to us." At 4:30 p.m., Carroll and her classmates filed out of the prison's gates to head back to campus. Hylton stayed inside.

## LSPC welcomes Paul Briley as new Executive Director! (Continued from page 1)

Dorsey Nunn, outgoing Executive Director, also shared his sentiments regarding Paul's appointment, remarking, "Paul has been an integral part of our organization for over 5 years, and his passion for social justice is matched only by his unwavering commitment to our mission. He possesses a profound understanding of the challenges faced by incarcerated individuals and their families, making him an ideal choice for this role."



(l-r) Paul Briley, Dorsey Nunn, and Dr. Tanisha Cannon. Photo by TuSin Sabir

Susan Burton, founder of A New Way of Life, added, "From Deputy Director to now Executive Director, Paul continues to be an invaluable asset to LSPC and the countless families they serve. His commitment and dedication to this work is unwavering. I want to extend my gratitude to Dorsey Nunn for his leadership and unwavering commitment to incarcerated individuals with children, a group whose unique needs are often unmet. While Dorsey leaves big shoes to fill, I'm confident that Paul will lead LSPC into its next

chapter of advocacy and organizing for a community of individuals who are so often unheard."

As Paul assumes the role of Executive Director, he looks forward to building upon the legacy of LSPC and advancing its mission of advocating for the rights of incarcerated individuals and their families. With a vision for a more just and equitable society, Paul is poised to lead LSPC into a new era of impact and transformation.

## Mailbag



### "Never-Ever"

by Maurice L. Foreman, Pocahontas State Correctional Center, Virginia

You never come ...  
But I'll meet you halfway ...

You never told me ...  
But I hear everything that you say ...

You never showed me ...  
But I see you clearly ...

You never did ...  
But I love you dearly ...

You never ...  
But will you ever ... ?

### Call For Art

AOUON wants to feature your original drawings, paintings, or comics!

Submit your artwork  
AOUON News Editor  
4400 Market Street  
Oakland, CA 94608



# Legal Corner

## Terminating Parental Rights in the Three Courts (Part 2)

by Meredith Wallis, LSPC Staff Attorney

In each of the three courts that decide custody—family, probate, and dependency (CPS or “child welfare” court)—there are different processes for terminating parental rights. In the first two courts—family and probate—termination of parental rights is fairly rare. In the third court, dependency, termination of parental rights is very common. In this column, I will briefly go over how termination occurs in California; in later columns, I will go into more detail on the most common form of termination (dependency).

It’s important to note, first, though, that many people confuse the terms “rights” and “custody.” So, for example, a mother may say to a father that she went to court and was granted sole “rights” to the child. In all likelihood, what she means is that she went to court and asked the court to grant her sole physical and legal custody without visitation rights to the father. Terminating rights in family and probate without consent is much more difficult than changing custody arrangements and requires more work, which is part of why it is not common. It also requires very strict “notice” requirements, meaning that whoever is asking to terminate rights must make very extensive efforts to notify the parent whose rights they are seeking to terminate. Additionally, it is uncommon because termination of parental rights cuts off the ability for the parent who retains custody to get child support.

In family court, termination of parental rights can happen three ways: (1) with the consent of the

parent or parents whose rights are being terminated, (2) without consent when the other parent can prove abandonment, or (3) without consent, when the other parent can prove that a relationship is detrimental because of severe abuse or other serious issues related to fitness to parent. The most common reason for terminating a parent’s rights in family court is for adoption of a baby; in this case, both the biological mother and father agree to have their rights terminated to allow for adoption. The other scenarios involve the termination of only one parent’s rights either to allow for step-parent adoption of the child or because one parent is claiming that any contact between the child and that parent is so detrimental that that parent should have all potential access to the child cut off. There are a variety of legal reasons that the parent looking to terminate for detriment can use, but the one most closely related to incarceration is Family Code 7825, which says that parental rights can be terminated where a parent is convicted of a felony and the facts of that crime are of such a nature to prove unfitness of the parent to have future custody.

In probate court, a legal guardian can apply to adopt a child that has been in their care by asking the court to terminate both parents’ rights. This is usually governed by Probate Code Section 1516.5, which requires at least two years of guardianship and proof that the child would benefit from being adopted by his or her guardian. To make its decision, the court takes into consideration any relationship between the child and the birth parent, the relationship between the guardian and the child, and any relationship between siblings. In some cases, a guardian could

move to ask a court to terminate earlier than two years if they can prove that the parents have abandoned the child, but this is very rare.

In dependency court, terminating parental rights is relatively easy and is set to happen almost automatically for younger children if a parent fails to reunify with their child after a maximum of two years. Because of this, incarcerated parents are particularly vulnerable to termination of parental rights. A Marshall Project analysis of 3 million child welfare cases nationally found that incarcerated parents with children in foster care are more likely to have their parental rights terminated than parents who have physically or sexually assaulted their kids. In a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services study, it was found that 1 in 8 incarcerated parents lost their parental rights, regardless of the seriousness of their offenses. The reason that so many incarcerated parents lose their rights in CPS cases is because CPS requires you to do extensive case plans to regain custody and if you fail to do those case plans, the law prefers adoption to any other option for your child. So as soon as the court has provided you the amount of reunification time that they are legally allowed to provide (again, never more than 2 years), the court is required to prefer adoption.

In the next column, we will discuss how to avoid adoption through dependency in more detail.



# Policy Update

by Jeronimo Cuauhtemoc Aguilar, LSPC Policy Analyst

Below are policy updates for LSPC/All of Us or None’s cosponsored bills for the 2023-2024 legislative session. We successfully navigated various committees these past weeks and look forward to continuing moving our priorities forward. We need and appreciate your support! Thank you for your commitment to justice and we’ll continue the struggle to support our incarcerated and formerly incarcerated community members. Please reach out if you’d like specific talking points or in depth information regarding a specific bill or campaign, you can contact me at [jeronimo@prisonerswithchildren.org](mailto:jeronimo@prisonerswithchildren.org). God Bless!

### ACA 8 Wilson, End Slavery in CA

Awaiting referral to Senate Public Safety

**Next Steps:** Contact your state Senator and urge them to support ACA 8 and to end the use of slavery/involuntary servitude as punishment for a crime! Find your rep: [www.findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov](http://www.findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov)

### AB 2282 McKinnor, Fair Chance at Family Reunification

Will be heard in Asm Judiciary Committee on 4/9

**Next Steps:** Contact your local Assemblymember and the Asm Judiciary committee members and urge

them to support AB 2282.

### AB 1186 Bonta, The R.E.P.A.I.R Act

Awaiting referral to next committee

**Next Steps:** Contact your local Assemblymember and make sure they are in support of the REPAIR Act.

### AB 1516 Kalra, Living Wage for All

Awaiting referral to Senate Labor Committee

**Next Steps:** Contact Senate Labor members and ensure they are in support of Living Wage for All.

### AB 2709 Bonta, Visiting and Strip Search

Recently passed Asm Public Safety committee on 4/2. Awaiting to be heard in Asm Appropriations

**Next Steps:** Contact Appropriations committee members and ensure they are in support of AB 2709 which will increase access to visitation for loved ones of incarcerated community members.

### AB 2959 Ortega, Incarcerated Family Support and Nutrition Act

Awaiting date to be heard in Asm Public Safety committee.

**Next Steps:** Contact your local Assemblymember and ensure they are in support of AB 2959 and they stop the price gouging of families while visiting their incarcerated loved ones.

### AB 2752 Calderon, Visitation in Dependency Court

Will be heard in Asm Judiciary committee on 4/9

**Next Steps:** Contact the Asm Judiciary committee and ensure they are in support of AB 2752.

### SB 1254 Becker, The F.R.E.S.H Act

Recently passed Sen Human Services committee on 4/1. Awaiting date for Sen Public Safety

**Next Steps:** Contact the Senate Public Safety committee members and encourage them educate them on the importance of calfresh benefits access for those preparing for release from incarceration.

### SB 1345 Smallwood-Cuevas, JAJA Act

Will be heard in Sen Judiciary committee on 4/16

**Next Steps:** Contact the Senate Judiciary committee members and encourage them to increase access to employment for those with conviction histories by limiting dependence on discriminative background checks.

### SB 1035 Ashby, Restitution Interest Reform

Recently passed Sen Public Safety on 4/2. Awaiting date in Sen Revenue and Taxation committee

**Next Steps:** Contact members of the Senate Revenue committee and ensure they understand the importance of reducing interest in restitution and how this will best serve victims and those struggling to keep up with crippling restitution debt.

# Mailbag

## Governor Newsom's Plan:

Implementing the plan, not the will of the voters  
(Part 1)

by Ojore Mckinnon, San Quentin CA

At a press conference on February 3, 2022, California Governor Gavin Newsom, announced: He has decided to dismantle death row at San Quentin State Prison.

This decision by the Governor is based on his intention to implement Proposition 66-a ballot measure approved by voters back in 2016.

According to the Governor, his plan is to transfer all condemn prisoners into general population over the course of two years to phase out the practice of segregating the condemn from other California prisoners, solely based on their sentence. The Plan: Is to transform San Quentin Prison into a modern rehabilitation center, to relocate some prisoners closer to family and/or the county of their commitment, in addition to providing the condemn

more access to rehabilitation programs.

I must say, the Governor was a bit disingenuous in his announcement plan. The notion he is implementing this plan to comply with Prop. 66 and the will of the voters is not entirely true. The body of the ballot measure stipulates the condemn shall be transferred out of San Quentin into general population to work for the purpose of paying restitution.

If the Governor's plan is to comply with Prop. 66, then he should implement all aspects of the proposition. Like: allocating more funds for Qualified Attorneys, and expediting those appeals stalled in the appellate court.

Furthermore, the notion condemn prisoners will be required to work and pay restitution is misleading. According to California law, every prisoner appealing their conviction is not required to pay restitution. In 2021, the California Supreme Court, ruled CDCR is to cease collecting restitution from (condemn) prisoners, their actions violate State Law Penal Code, Sec. 1243:

In the case of People v. Chloun (2021), case law: 2021 West Law 506110. The decision required

the state and/or CDCR to cease collecting restitution payments from those appealing their conviction, pending the completion of their automatic appeals. Therefore, pursuant to Penal Code, Sec. 1243, CDCR is prevented from collecting restitution payments from 'wages' and 'Trust Account' deposits of inmates sentenced to death while their "Automatic Appeals" are ongoing. To date, 700+ condemn prisoners continue to have ongoing appeals.

The Governor's failure to fund and expedite appeals according to Prop. 66, in addition to the current moratorium he placed on the death penalty has prevented individuals like myself from being appointed qualified attorneys.

What is the real plan of the Governor...

I have some idea, and I will share my thoughts with you in Part Two. But I can assure you nothing is ever as politicians make it out to be. Surely the champions of Prop. 66, did not care to inform the California voter of penal code, section 1243, back in 2016.



## Melanated Girl

By David Meade, AOUON inside member

The young melanated girl grew up with insecurities about her skin tone that made her feel cursed and extremely tacky.

Every morning when she arrived at school she became overwhelmed as the adolescent screamed out vocals calling her "Black, Black, Blacky."

Being darker than a berry with tangled hair that resembles wool was no ordinary task, especially with her mother always yelling out sentiments such as, "I'll beat you until you turn purple and do your homework before I kick your black ass."

Some days when she looked in the mirror it often caused her on many occasions and many nights to just cry herself to sleep, and her very first boyfriend left her for a red-bone that internally cut her vehemently so deep.

She couldn't get lead roles during her acting career because the cast always searched for lighter talent

and the directors were just belligerent and mean.

Through years of resistance and a boost of her self-esteem, she now graces the covers of Ebony and Essence Magazine!

## Hidden in the Dirt of Darkness

By David Meade, AOUON inside member

A child may go through psychological pain of being afraid of the dark, but the real tragedy of life is when man is afraid of the light and afraid to accomplish his goals with body, mind, and heart.

A child may be afraid of failure and not want to try to succeed again, but it's shameful for a man to just quit and not know that the day that he fails is when his true journey then begins.

A child may not know right from wrong as he destroys and depicts the beauty of a sacred valley, but it's like a man is hallucinating in blindness when he refuses to face the depth of his own reality.

Why be afraid of the light when it will eventually prevails after the climax of darkness, Except the light with truthfulness and honesty even if you accept it with embarrassment and harshness.

Not accepting the truth is like falling from a bicycle and then getting up and kicking the bike, and rather you reflect the truth or accept it but that which goes on in the darkness will soon prevail within the light.



**MAIL YOUR SUBMISSIONS TO:**

**Freedom & Movement Center  
AOUON Newspaper Editor  
4400 MARKET STREET  
OAKLAND, CA 94608**

Inside News Articles. Opinion Pieces. Reviews. Features:  
Creative or exploratory. News Analysis. Poetry. Art. Comics  
We can't wait to hear from you!

# Jesse's Corner - Call to Action

by Jesse Burlison LSPC/AOUON In-Custody  
Program Coordinator

It's that time again! What time is it? Time to call your families and friends and tell them to register to vote. We need all hands on deck! We need everyone to turn out this November. Not just for the presidential race, but for what will be on the ballot here in California! We are trying to change history! We are changing the state constitution of California! Just like we did in 2020.

The state constitution cannot be changed by the politicians. Only the people (voters) can change it.

In 2020, we had Proposition 17 placed onto the ballot for voters, and they passed it. What did Prop 17 do? It changed the California constitution to allow people on parole to vote. Never had people on parole been able to vote in California. Now we can, simply because more people voted for Prop 17 than against it.

Now we could change what the state constitution says about how people inside of CDCR are treated.

Right now, the constitution says that "involuntary servitude" is "legal" to impose upon people in prison as a "punishment" for crime. Constitutional law is what allows the state's penal code to "require" prisoners to work; see Penal Code section 2700.

Assembly Constitutional Amendment 8 (ACA 8) would abolish involuntary servitude as a punishment for crime, prohibiting it without exception. ACA 8 is a bill currently pending before the state senate for their vote to go onto the ballot in November. If the voters pass ACA 8, then slavery and involuntary servitude will no longer be allowed as a "punishment" for crime. It will be prohibited in California, without exception! And prisoners will enjoy the right to choose what jobs they want (or don't want) without the risk of being penalized.

As you're reading this, there are some senators and others who are saying that "it costs too much" to abolish involuntary servitude (slavery) inside of prisons. At the same time, these persons are also being forced to say that aloud for the world to hear because we have put the issue on the table so that no one can be silent about it now. It's a clear two-sided issue. Either you are on the right side or the

wrong side. If you won't support ACA 8 then you are saying that you openly support slavery. That is the moral line.

Unlike in the days of yore, people like me, who are formerly incarcerated, have the right to vote now. And we're using our vote like a gun, aiming at every bad law standing. The vote is free so why not use it. And when united with the millions of votes of others, one vote is a powerful weapon in the world of democracy. One vote can change reality!

So, contact your family and friends and make sure that everybody is registered to vote. Share with them what the issues are. If you need more information, reach out.



# 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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Name & Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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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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