

PRISON
POLICY INITIATIVE

2017-2018

ANNUAL REPORT

November 2018

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“PPI is one of the most imaginative research groups illuminating the dark recesses of our carceral landscape”

-Pete Brook
Prison Photography

Executive Director's letter

Dear Friends,

Despite the ceaselessly punitive rhetoric of the Trump administration, the recent election results show that, across the country, the public is ready for criminal justice reform. Advocates like you and me have a critical opportunity to engage, encourage, and inform new allies in the movement to end mass incarceration.

At the Prison Policy Initiative, we have redoubled our efforts to push state-level reforms forward and reinvigorate national debates about justice reform. We've expanded our capacity, refined our strategy, and found new ways to expose the extensive reach and harms of correctional control. In an incredibly productive year, we released eleven major publications, including big-picture national reports, exposés, legislative briefings, and guides for advocates and journalists.

I'm particularly proud of our work unraveling the complicated knots of “prison retail” systems (p. 14). For years, prison families have complained of being charged exorbitant fees to send money to their loved ones, to pay for commissary goods like soap and medicine, and even to send an email to someone in prison. But little is known about the private vendors providing these overpriced goods and services. Before this year, we didn't even have good data on how much these items cost.

These are bread-and-butter issues that affect the daily lives of incarcerated people and their families, but anecdotes aren't enough to prove that the system is unfair. So we pored over commissary sales records and contracts with prisons for “free” tablet computers until a clear picture emerged. It's one we've seen before, where private companies manipulate correctional facilities into shortchanging families.

The Prison Policy Initiative exists to tell data-driven stories like these in order to make the moral case for ending mass incarceration. And as we witnessed again this year, our work is helping to help build consensus for decarceration and state-level reforms. For example:

- Illinois lawmakers voted to eliminate medical co-pays in prisons, which our 2017 research revealed can cost an incarcerated person one-third of their monthly income for a single doctor's visit. (The governor vetoed the bill, but the House has already voted to override the veto.)
- When we reported that Oklahoma had become the state with the highest incarceration rate in the country in *States of Incarceration: The Global Context 2018* (p. 6), the state took notice: the director of the DOC responded in an op-ed, “we can and must do better,” even in the wake of hard-won reforms.
- Two years after we published *Reinstating Common Sense*, more states continue to reject the federal law automatically suspending the driver's licenses of people convicted of drug offenses unrelated to driving (p. 17).

The non-profit, non-partisan Prison Policy Initiative **produces cutting edge research** to expose the **broader harm of mass incarceration**, and then **sparks advocacy campaigns** to create a more just society.

- Our work to protect in-person visitation from replacement with low-quality paid video chats continues to gain steam: this year, Massachusetts joined other states in passing legislation that protects in-person visits from the sheriffs and companies who would end them (p. 12).

And while the federal-level disappointments keep on coming, advocates are using those setbacks to demand immediate justice at the state and local levels. For example:

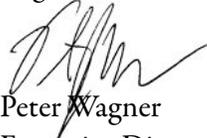
- The Census Bureau announced that it would not end prison gerrymandering in the next Census (p. 16) but our statement in response to the decision brought greater attention to the problem and to our state-based solutions, which four states have already passed. In fact, this year, the New Jersey legislature passed a bill to end prison gerrymandering in the state; it was ultimately vetoed by former governor Chris Christie, but we think we are poised to win this session under the new governor.
- The Federal Communications Commission may have abandoned its previous goal of protecting families from the prison and jail telephone industry (p. 10), but state and local advocates are picking up some of the slack. Many state prison systems have lowered their rates, state regulators are starting to take action, and we are optimistic that more jails might follow the lead of New York City, which announced that they are simply going to make calls from the city's jails free.

The overall effect of all of this state reform is slow but steady progress. Nationwide, the number of people in prisons has fallen for the fifth year in a row; their numbers have fallen by 126,000 since peaking in 2009. At the current pace of reform, we won't end mass incarceration in our lifetimes – but if we can leverage the growing public support for more ambitious reforms, we can pick up the pace.

The past year has given us reason to be optimistic, despite the long road ahead. Our movement is gaining allies and momentum. And as an organization, your support has helped us add two more staff, growing our research capacity and making our strategic communications work even more effective.

I'm proud of our accomplishments this year and honored you made it possible. I thank you for helping the Prison Policy Initiative play a vital part in the larger movement against mass incarceration.

In gratitude,



Peter Wagner
Executive Director
November 29, 2018

Who we are

The non-profit, non-partisan Prison Policy Initiative **produces cutting edge research** to expose the **broader harm of mass incarceration**, and then sparks **advocacy campaigns** to create a more just society.

The Prison Policy Initiative was founded in 2001 to document and publicize how mass incarceration undermines our national welfare. Our growing team of interdisciplinary researchers and organizers, along with student interns and volunteers, shapes national reform campaigns from our office in western Massachusetts.

Staff

- Wanda Bertram, *Communications Strategist*
- Lucius Couloute, *Policy Analyst*
- Alexi Jones, *Policy Analyst*
- Aleks Kajstura, *Legal Director*
- Jorge Renaud, *Senior Policy Analyst*
- Wendy Sawyer, *Senior Policy Analyst*
- Peter Wagner, *Executive Director*

Part-time staff

- Mack Finkel, *Research Analyst*
- Bernadette Rabuy, *Senior Policy Analyst*
- Maddy Troilo, *Researcher*
- Emily Widra, *Researcher*

Student interns and volunteers

- Alex Clark, *George Washington University*
- Sasha Feldstein, *Young Professionals Network*
- Greer Hamilton, *Young Professionals Network*
- Sarah Hertel-Fernandez, *Young Professionals Network*
- Sari Kisilevsky, *Young Professionals Network*
- Jacob Mitchell, *Young Professionals Network*
- Stephen Raheer, *Young Professionals Network*

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- Bill Cooper, *GIS*
- Bob Machuga, *Graphic Design*
- Jordan Miner, *Programming*
- Elydah Joyce, *Illustrations*

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- Angela Wessels
- Brenda Wright, *Dēmos: A Network for Ideas and Action*
- Rebecca Young, *Attorney*

*Organizations for identification purposes only.

Pulling back the curtain on mass incarceration

<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/national>

We develop powerful ways to help the public understand that mass incarceration is both unprecedented and counterproductive.

With our creative research strategies and engaging graphics, we are laying the foundation for fairer and more effective justice policies.

Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2018

We made the most popular visual in the criminal justice reform movement more helpful than ever: The 2018 version of our *Whole Pie* report now stands alongside two other big-picture reports about women (p. 7) and youth (p. 5). And as the public becomes aware of less well-known forms of incarceration — like the detention of immigrants and of pretrial defendants who can't afford bail — we've updated our report with 11 new data visuals illuminating these small but crucial slices of the "pie."



A screenshot of a tweet from Brooklyn Bail Fund (@BKBAIFund) promoting a new "whole pie" report by @PrisonPolicy. The tweet states that pretrial detention is responsible for ALL OF THE NET JAIL GROWTH in the last 20 years. Below the tweet is a pie chart titled "Pre-trial Detention" with the following data:

Category	Count
Local	465,000
Federal	51,000
Youth	9,000
Psychiatric evaluation or treatment	9,000
Indian Country	1,100

The tweet also includes a quote from Scott Hechinger (@ScottHech) stating: "Anyone who wants to understand how sick America is with a love for incarceration, MUST check this out. So many highlights, but here are a couple: 1. The US has more people (500k) locked up 'pretrial' than most countries have in jails/prisons combined."

A screenshot of a tweet from César (@cimmigration) reporting that every day, ICE confines ~34,000 people, US Marshals Service another 13,000, and Bureau of Prisons another 13,000. Below the tweet is a stacked bar chart titled "Immigration offenses put over 60,000 people behind bars" with the following data:

Agency	Count
U.S. Marshals Service	13,000
Bureau of Prisons	13,000
Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)	34,000

The ICE total of 34,000 is further broken down into: In ICE facilities (3,400), In private prisons contracting with ICE (22,300), and In local jails contracting with ICE (8,600). The PRISON POLICY INITIATIVE logo is visible at the bottom.

Youth Confinement: The Whole Pie

Young people make up only a sliver of the criminal justice system, but 53,000 children and teens are still held in confinement on any given night. Our report breaks down where youth are being held: Not only are one in 10 confined youth held in an adult jail or prison, but the majority of youth are held in facilities virtually indistinguishable from prison. We reveal how tens of thousands of young people who could be cared for in their communities end up in highly restrictive facilities, betraying the stated purpose of the juvenile justice system.

John King @JohnBKing

New report highlights “the ways that the problems of the criminal justice system are mirrored in the juvenile system: racial disparities, punitive conditions, pretrial detention, and overcriminalization.”

melanie @melanienewport

as we talk about conditions faced by children imprisoned for coming to the United States, let us remember that incarcerating kids is a broad based effort that involves localities, states, and the federal government. this tradition of harm has deep roots. Chart via @PrisonPolicy

LatinoJustice PRLDEF @latinojustice

Racial disparity in our criminal justice system in shocking and it starts at an early age. This report by @PrisonPolicy shows that the disparity starts with #JuvenileJustice and continues from there. #CJReform #PrisonReform

SPLINTER

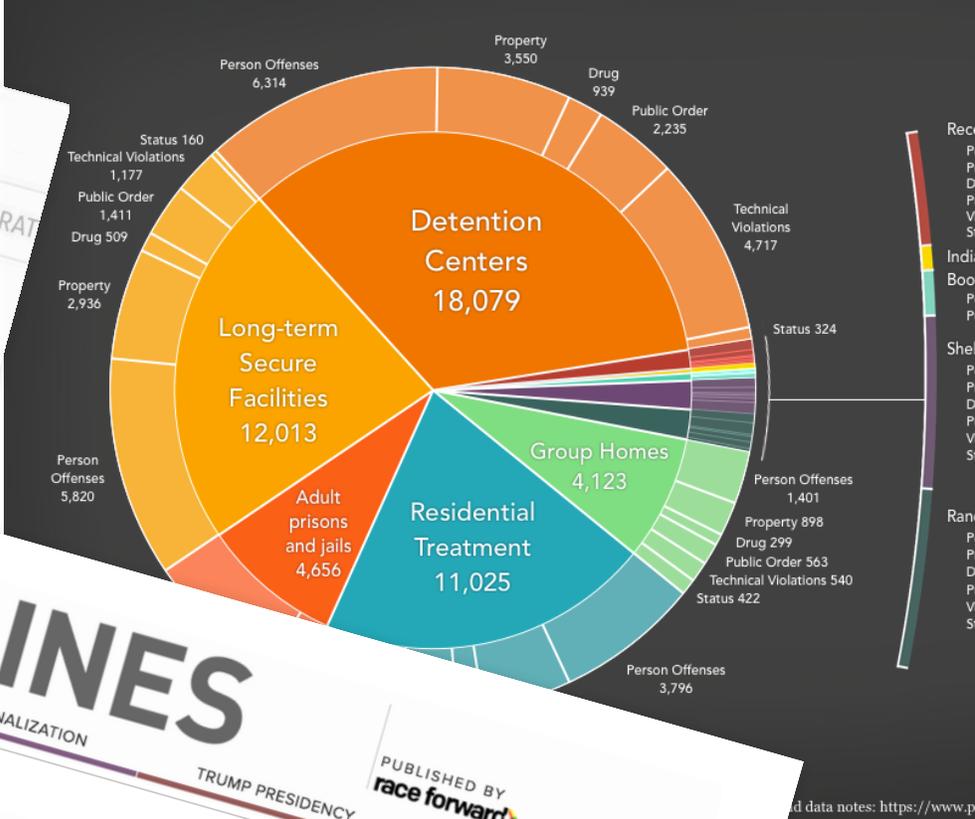
VIDEO CONGRESS ELECTIONS FEATURES IMMIGRATION

Mass Incarceration Starts at 12 Years Old

Emma Roller
2/27/18 5:03pm

How many youths are locked up in the United States

Every day, nearly 53,000 youths are held in facilities away from home as a result of juvenile or criminal justice involvement.



COLORLINES

HOT TOPICS ARTS & CULTURE CRIMINALIZATION TRUMP PRESIDENCY GENDER & SEXUALITY

Juvenile Injustice: Racial Disparities in Incarceration Start Early

A new report shows that, just like its adult counterpart, the juvenile justice system is engulfed with overcrowding and racial imbalances.

Alfonso Serrano | FEB 28, 2018 12:33PM EST

Much like its adult counterpart, the United States' juvenile justice system teems with racial disparities and overcrowding in settings inundated with non-violent, low-level offenders, according to a new report from the nonprofit Prison Policy Initiative.

or chronic off-
critic

States of Incarceration: The Global Context 2018

Our report and infographic directly situate individual U.S. states in the global context. In an update to our 2014 and 2016 reports, we compare U.S. states to 166 countries on incarceration, revealing that nearly half of all U.S. states have higher incarceration rates than *any independent country on earth*. Alarming, even states that have embraced “progressive” criminal justice reforms have rates far higher than other Western democracies. The report has sparked dialogue in states like Oklahoma, which recently unseated Louisiana as the country’s leading incarcerator. (We released a companion report on states’ incarceration of women; see page 8.)

Out of Prison and Out of Work:

Unemployment among formerly incarcerated people

Formerly incarcerated people want to work, but face tremendous obstacles in the job market. We used a little-known government survey to produce the first-ever national unemployment rate for formerly incarcerated people, finding that 27% of people who have been in prison are looking for a job but can’t find one. This rate surpasses anything Americans have experienced, even at the height of the Great Depression, and captured the attention of media outlets like NBC and Bloomberg TV. In later reports, we went on to measure formerly incarcerated people’s rates of homelessness and educational mobility — because before we can tackle the monumental problems with reentry in America, we need national data. Our discoveries are already having an impact on discussions about reentry reform.



Breaking down the impact of mass incarceration on women

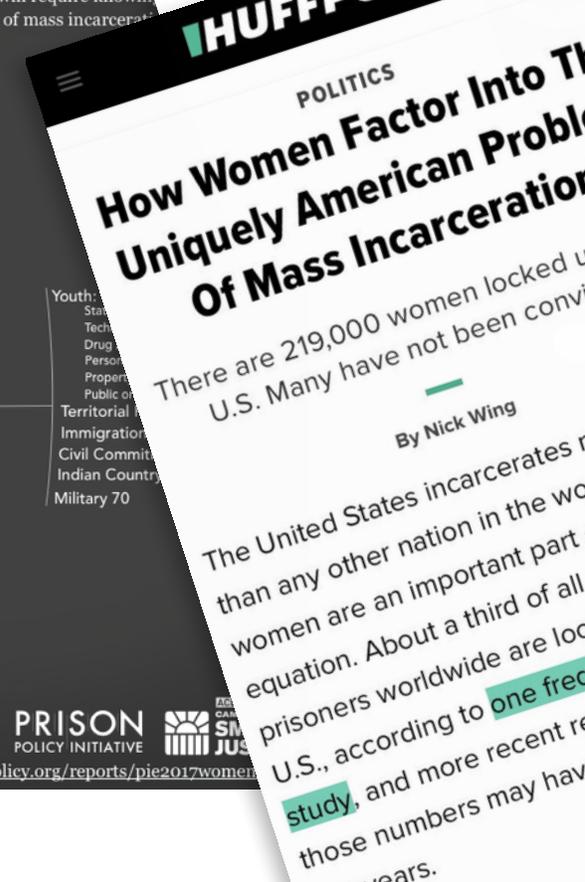
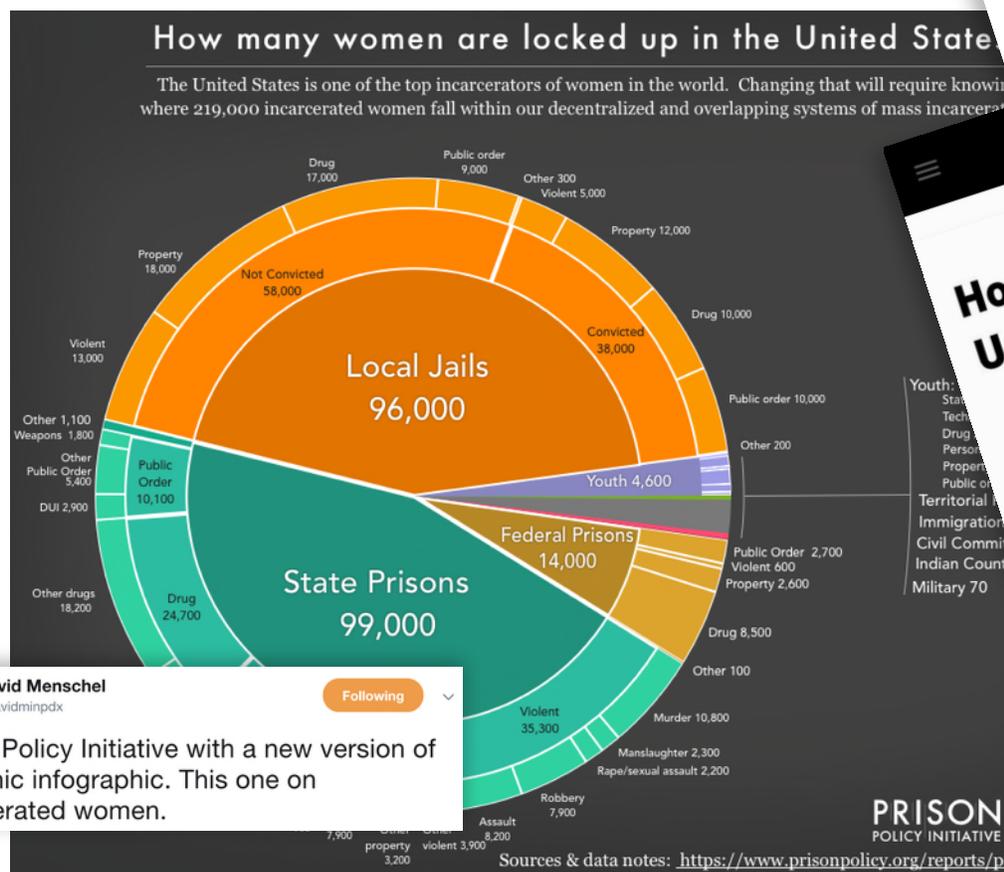
<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/women.html>

Women are the fastest-growing segment of the incarcerated population, but data about their experiences behind bars isn't readily available. We're working to change that.

Understanding the injustices experienced by incarcerated women is more timely than ever, as policy issues that particularly affect them — like money bail and mental health treatment — receive more attention. We released three big-picture reports designed to help states take more ambitious steps to reduce women's incarceration — steps that will also keep more families together.

Women's Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie

We provided a first-of-its-kind detailed view of the 219,000 women incarcerated in the United States, where they are locked up, and why. Our analysis included the striking finding that nearly half of all incarcerated women are held in local jails. We used our “whole pie” approach to give the public and policymakers the foundation to end mass incarceration without leaving women behind.



David Menschel
@davidmnpdx

Following

Prison Policy Initiative with a new version of its iconic infographic. This one on incarcerated women.

PRISON POLICY INITIATIVE

Sources & data notes: <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2017women>

The Gender Divide: Tracking women's state prison growth

We charted women's prison trends in all 50 states since 1978, identifying states where criminal justice policies have left women behind. Our report identified more than 30 states where recent criminal justice reforms have had little to no impact on women, including several extraordinary states where women's populations have risen even as men's have declined. All too often, we showed, treating women's incarceration as an afterthought holds back state efforts to decarcerate.

States of Women's Incarceration: The Global Context 2018

Worldwide and in the U.S., the vast majority of people incarcerated are men. As a result, women's incarceration rates are often lost in the data. Our report and infographics document how women fare in the world's carceral landscape by comparing incarceration rates for women in each U.S. state with 166 independent countries. The results are sobering: Even U.S. states with comparatively low incarceration rates for women far outrank the majority of the world.

Kerry Kennedy @KerryKennedyRFK
Nearly 3 million women are jailed per year in the U.S. - 80% are mothers. @PrisonPolicy's new report affirms that even short stays in jail can be devastating, especially when it separates a mother from her child. #CJReform

Rebekah Taylor @Rebekah_C_Tayl
This spring at a conference everyone was shocked when I told them the statistics about Oklahoma's incarceration rate for women. This visual is frightening

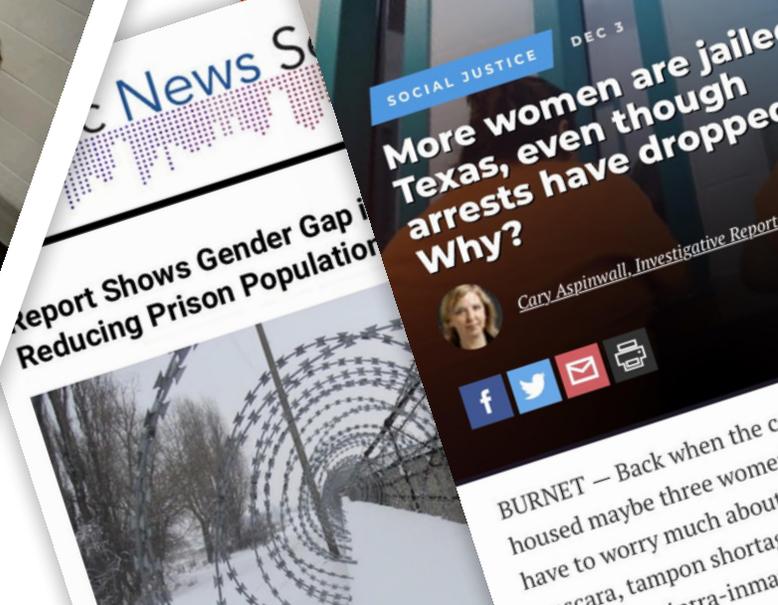
Country	Incarceration rates per 100,000 women
Oklahoma	131
United States	11
Portugal	11
Luxembourg	11
United Kingdom	11
Canada	11
Norway	11
Belgium	11
Italy	11
France	11
Netherlands	11
Iceland	11
Denmark	11

4:19 PM - 9 Sep 2018
61 Retweets 67 Likes



Women's prison populations in 35 states worse than men's," study says

word in which Michelle Alexander never
New Jim Crow and Ava DuVernay
which Barack Obama never made criminal
prisons fell by less than 0.33%.
"In 35 states," the report said, "women's population
numbers have fared worse than men's, and in a few
extraordinary states, women's prison popula
growth enough to counteract red
"Too often, crim



Shining a light on local jails

<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/jails.html>

One out of every three people who were behind bars last night was confined in a jail, two out of every three correctional facilities are jails, and almost every person (95%) released from a correctional facility today was released from a jail.

Jails are literally mass incarceration's front door, yet the scant attention paid to jails and jail policy is itself a key impediment to reform. We're putting jails and the need for jail reform directly into the national discussion on criminal justice reform. This year's highlights included:

- **Explaining the complex reality of jails and what they do.** How many people in local jails have yet to be convicted of a crime? How many are immigrants held for ICE? How many are there for a probation violation? Piecing together jail data (which is notoriously fragmented), we made all of these questions easy to answer for the first time in a detailed jails infographic featured in *Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2018*.
- **Visualizing 10.6 million jail admissions each year.** The daily jail population hardly captures the enormous churn in and out of jails and the true number of people affected. Americans go to jail a staggering 10.6 million times each year, which increases their risk of committing suicide, becoming homeless, or losing welfare benefits. We collaborated with illustrators Mona Chalabi and Elydah Joyce (below) on multiple visualizations of just how vast a number 10.6 million admissions is.



Clint Smith
@ClintSmith11

Following

As a reminder, 70% of people held in local jails have not been convicted of any crimes (via @PrisonPolicy) [prisonpolicy.org/graphs/pie2017...](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/graphs/pie2017...)



9:18 AM - 21 Mar 2018

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11 407 565



Michael Gibson-Light
@MGibsonLight

Follow

Wow. These visualizations of daily - yearly jail admissions are nearly incomprehensible. Take a look.



Safety and Justice
@safety_justice

Following

From @PrisonPolicy: There are nearly 11M jail admissions every year in the United States—enough people to fill prison buses lined back-to-back from NYC to San Francisco. bit.ly/2pahUmW #RethinkJails



Bringing fairness to the prison and jail phone industry

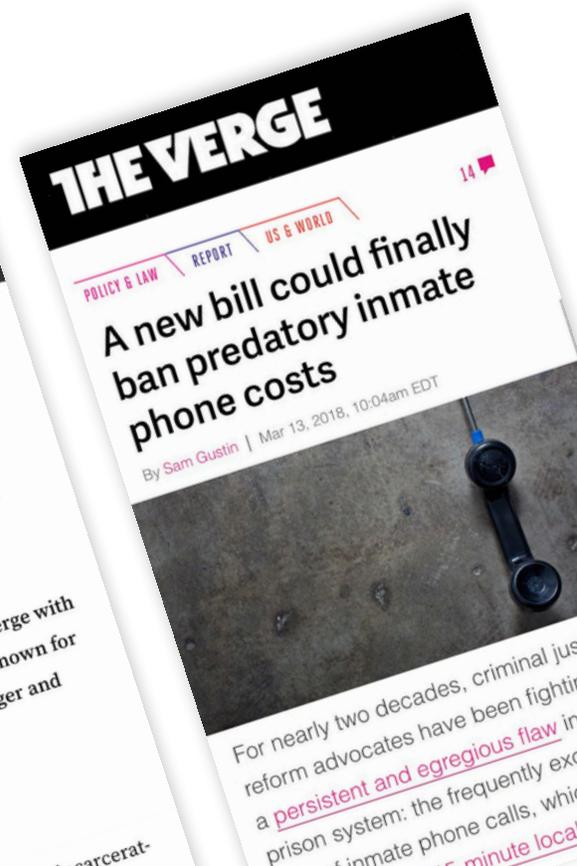
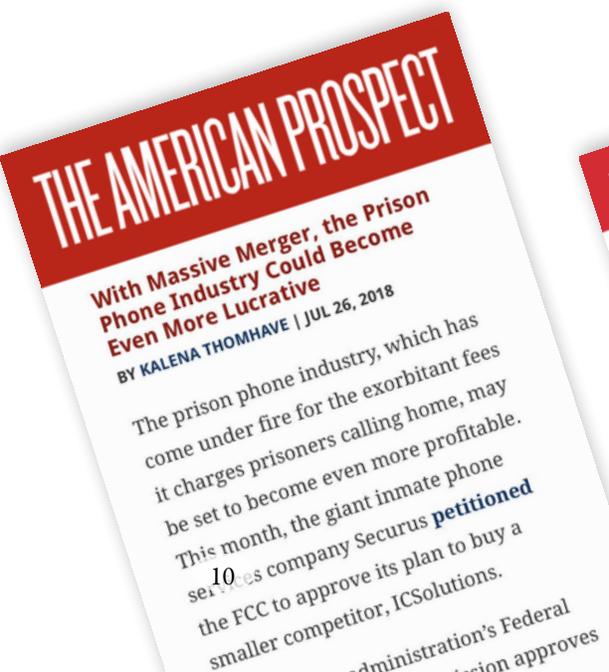
<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/phones/>

Some children have to pay \$1/minute to talk to an incarcerated parent. Why? Because prisons and jails profit by granting monopoly telephone contracts to the company that will charge families the most.

For more than 15 years, families trying to stay in touch with incarcerated loved ones have been calling on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to provide relief from exorbitant prison and jail telephone bills. Recognizing yet another way that mass incarceration punishes entire communities, we've made it a priority to bring justice to these families.

In 2013 and 2015 the FCC approved historic regulations that would make calls home from prisons and jails more affordable. As expected, the phone companies sued to stop these regulations. The FCC, under President Trump, abandoned its campaign for fair phone rates — but some of the regulations nevertheless survived in court.

We're not giving up. We're fighting the merger of two of the industry's giants, and we're taking our campaign to the states: calling on state regulators and legislators to cap the cost of calling home from jails, and directly calling on the facilities to refuse kickbacks and bring rates down. Our campaign is making progress on several fronts, from new price caps in Ohio to New York City's recent decision to make all calls from the city's jails free.



Protecting family visits from the exploitative video calling industry

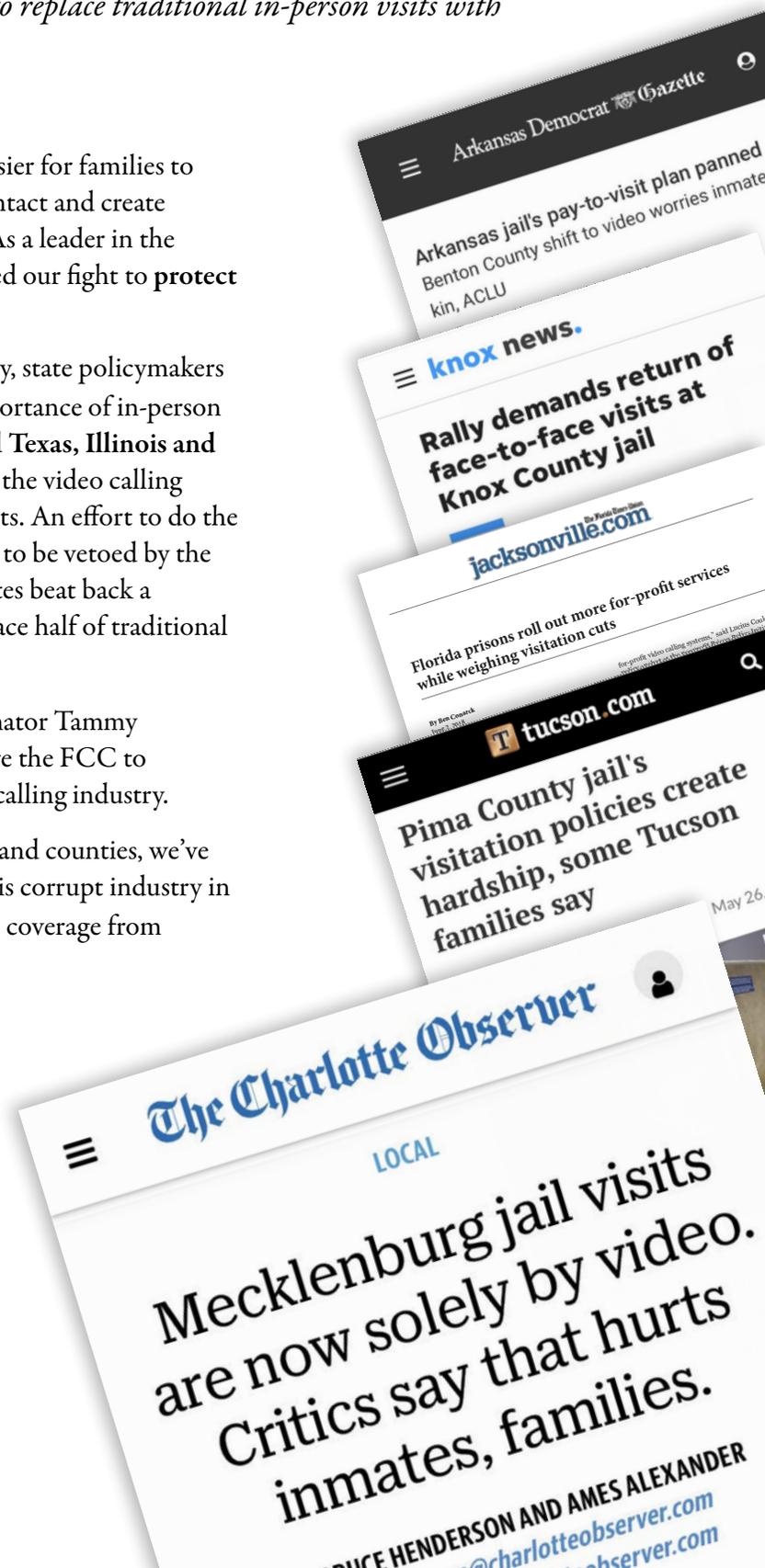
<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/visitation/>

County jails collude with private companies to replace traditional in-person visits with expensive, low-quality video chats.

Video calling, a technology that should make it easier for families to stay in touch, is being used to eliminate human contact and create profits for both private companies and local jails. As a leader in the movement to regulate the industry, we've continued our fight to **protect families and enact lasting change**:

- With the help of our research and advocacy, state policymakers across the country are recognizing the importance of in-person visits. Most recently, **Massachusetts** joined **Texas**, **Illinois** and **California** in passing measures to regulate the video calling industry and preserve in-person family visits. An effort to do the same in **Maine** passed the legislature (only to be vetoed by the Governor), and we helped **Florida** advocates beat back a proposal by the state prison system to replace half of traditional visitation with paid computer chats.
- At the **federal** level, we supported U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth's (D-IL) bill that would require the FCC to regulate the exploitative video and phone calling industry.

To help advocates fight the industry in their states and counties, we've published a toolkit of resources; we've also kept this corrupt industry in the press, generating editorial support and positive coverage from newspapers around the country.





The end of American prison visits: Jails end face-to-face contact - and families suffer

The Scourge of For-Profit Video Visitation in Prisons and Jails

Visitors must now pay for the privilege of video-chatting with their loved ones, and say goodbye to face-to-face visits.

By Hannah Riley 07/28/2017 02:45 pm ET

The Bristol County House of Corrections in North Dartmouth, Massachusetts, has just a dubious distinction: It is the first major facility in the state to ban in-person visits...

is no stranger to controversy; they were one of a number of companies which were discovered to be providing telephone services to incarcerated individuals at far higher rates than the general public...

OPINION

The Times-Union

OUR VIEW

It makes no sense to cut prisoner visits

And it may even increase the chances of released prisoners making successful transitions to life in the community. In fact, a 2015 report by the Prison Policy Initiative says the positive results of visitation are so numerous that it recommended prison systems across the country enact policies that actively encourage visitation.

Sometimes it seems the system is driven by a relentless desire to degrade and dehumanize the people who visit inmates. So it should come as no surprise that the people who visit inmates are being treated with the same disrespect and degradation as the inmates themselves.

Jails are replacing visits with video calls— inmates and families hate it

We tried one of the awful video services many jails offer instead of visitation.

TIMOTHY B. LEE - 5/14/2018, 7:15 AM

When Rebecca Parr visited her nephew Justin Harker recently at the Knox County Jail in Tennessee, she didn't get the opportunity to see him face to face—or even through glass. Instead, she was ushered into a cramped, crowded room for a "video visitation."

Video visits have a role, but should not replace in-person visits in Maine jails

EDITORIALS | WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 2018

It is understandable that Maine's cash-strapped county jails are turning to video visits for their inmates. Such visits require less staff oversight and, as sheriffs argue, cut down on contraband being smuggled into jails.

There are downsides, however, such as more discipline problems within jails, and researchers have found that switching from in-person to video visitation does not reduce contraband smuggling. Against this backdrop, Maine lawmakers passed a bill in March to preserve in-person visits for most county jail inmates. LD 1414 allowed for restrictions on such visits for safety and security reasons.

Gov. Paul LePage vetoed the bill. Although his concerns about "micromanagement" of county jails are well placed, they are trumped by the value of in-person visits for inmates and their families. But lawmakers failed to override the veto. Although this means in-person visits won't be required by law, Maine's jails should not abandon them.

Freely from the "micromanagement" of county jails, disdained, coun...

their families, as well as jail staff and the communities to which inmates will return. "Visits provide the real, tangible, physical evidence of love and support," Peter Lehman told lawmakers last year. "It means a great deal when friends and family step up and travel and spend time supporting their loved one."

Lehman, who spent five years in prison, spoke of how in-person visits allowed him to maintain a relationship with his daughter, a bond that remains strong today.

Like Lehman, almost every inmate in the state's jails will one day be released and go back to living in their communities. Whether they have a predictor of whether they will improve their lives or return to jail. Research shows that one of the best ways to maintain needed support connections, and to reduce recidivism, is to maintain strong relationships with family and friends.

the facility," the report quoted an Indiana prison official as saying.

More contact is clearly better, and video visitation is better than no contact at all, the report notes. Maine jails have successfully used video visits to allow prisoners to remain in contact with family members who live far from the facility.

But video visits have their drawbacks, the report noted, including the reality that a video visit just isn't the same as personal contact, that it can be expensive for families (jails charge visitors for the video visits, sometimes as much as \$1 a minute) and that the use of video visitation means the end of traditional visitation.

Bangor Daily News

Exposing the big business of “prison retail”

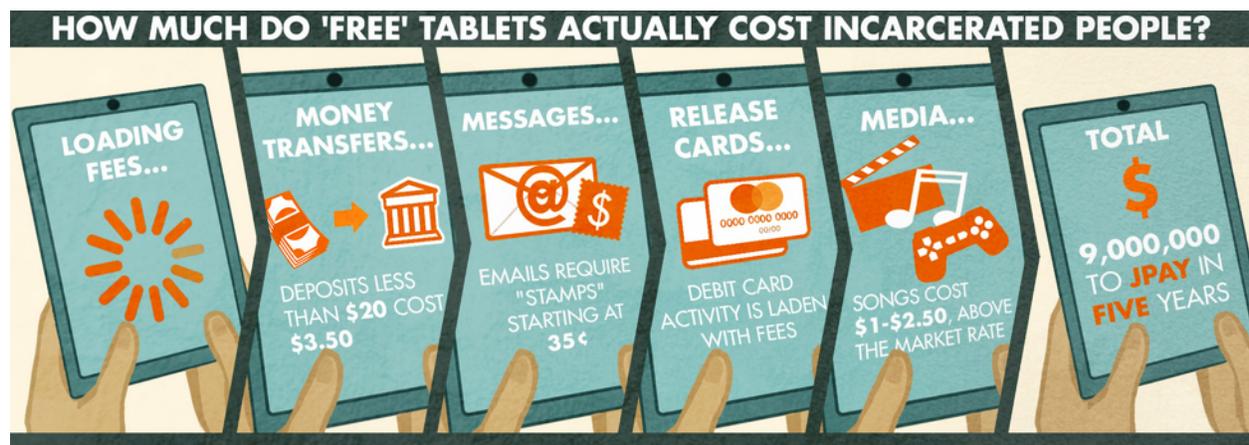
<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/exploitation.html>

Claiming to improve prison life, private retailers like JPay and The Keefe Group sell goods directly to incarcerated people, at unfair prices and frequently with hidden fees.

Rather than foot the bill for basic necessities like food and medicine, prisons are partnering with for-profit retailers to sell these basics to incarcerated people, trimming budgets by forcing people in prison to pay for hygiene and nutrition. Having attained direct access to a captive market, these “prison retailers” seize other opportunities for abuse, like charging incarcerated people 50¢ to send an email.

We’re shedding much-needed light on these exploitative practices, which previously received little attention:

- Our May report *The Company Store* exposed the unfairness of prison commissaries. When prisons fail to provide decent meals and other needs, the commissary is the only option. Analyzing sales data in three states, we found that incarcerated people mostly buy basics at the commissary — food, hygiene, and medicine — spending their meager wages (and money from their families) on items that the state should provide for free.
- We also published a guide to an insidious new form of exploitation: Prison retailers offering to provide prisons with “free” tablet computers. The tablets are rife with hidden user fees, as well as shoddy digital services like prison email. Our work got the media’s attention, inspiring outlets from *Slate* to *Wired* to investigate the profit model of retailers like JPay.



FUTURE TENSE

Digital Sales Are Transforming Business Within Prisons

Private companies are using e-messaging, tablets, and other technology to help inmates and their families. But some worry about the impact on the prison system.

By MIA ARMSTRONG
JULY 19, 2018

THE OUTRAGEOUS SCAM OF "FREE" TABLETS FOR THE INCARCERATED

The devices are little more than an exorbitant payroll for education and communication.

f t w e

By Michael Waters

One told inmates in Colorado why their tablets were being taken away. On August 1, around two weeks after the Colorado Department of Corrections rolled out its much-hyped program to give inmates in the state a free iPad, the department announced that it had taken away all the tablets from the prisons.

Pacific Standard



ARE PRISON COMMISSARIES FAIR?

KATE WHEELING | MAY 30, 2018

Incarceration is expensive, and prisons and jails often attempt to shift the costs to inmates and their families, charging for phone calls, emails, and even basic necessities from the commissary like food and toiletries. Previous estimates pegged commissary sales in prisons and jails as a \$1.6 billion industry, but a new report from the Prison Policy Initiative suggests that the number may be even higher.

For the report, attorney Stephen Raher parsed commissary sales data for three states—Massachusetts, Washington, and Illinois—to find out how much inmates were spending on things like snacks, hygiene products, stationary, clothing, and electronics. Raher found that, across all three states, inmates spent an average of \$947 on commissary goods annually. Meanwhile, yearly prison wages in these states range from \$180 to \$660, according to Raher. Of course, not every inmate is able to work, which means that "families are effectively forced to subsidize the prison system," Raher writes. Of course, not every inmate's family members are capable of or willing to transfer money to the commissary. Raher estimates that only 15 percent of inmates' family members are able to make any purchases beyond their own.



CAPTIVE AUDIENCE: HOW COMPANIES MAKE MILLIONS CHARGING PRISONERS TO SEND AN EMAIL

BY VICTORIA LAW 08.03.18

For companies like JPay, the business model is simple: Whatever it costs to send a message, prisoners and their families will find a way to pay it.

Last July, as she has for the past 10 years, Dianne Jones spent 45 minutes on a city bus heading to the local Walmart.

There, under fluorescent lights, she scanned rows of brightly colored birthday cards to pick out the perfect greeting for her son—let's call him Tim—who is imprisoned more than 100 miles from his mother's home in New Orleans. The card she settled on was dark blue and had a birthday message that read, "For the

... of a 30-year prison sentence ... at age 17; he would not ... a tree for the ... that her ... and her

prohibition on greeting cards. If she wanted to send a card, a prison official told her, Jones would have to pass along a greeting electronically using JPay, a company bringing email into prison systems across the nation.

Prisons are notoriously low-tech places. But urged by privately owned companies, like JPay, facilities across the country are adding e-messaging, a rudimentary form of email that remains disconnected from the larger web. Nearly half of all state prison systems now have some form of e-messaging. JPay's services are available to prisoners in 20 states, including Louisiana.



On the surface, e-messaging seems like an easy and efficient way for families to keep in touch—a quick, century version of pen-and-paper mail. Companies

Report Calls Out Nickel-and-Diming Prison Commissaries

By David Krajicek | May 25, 2018



Protecting our democracy from mass incarceration by ending prison gerrymandering

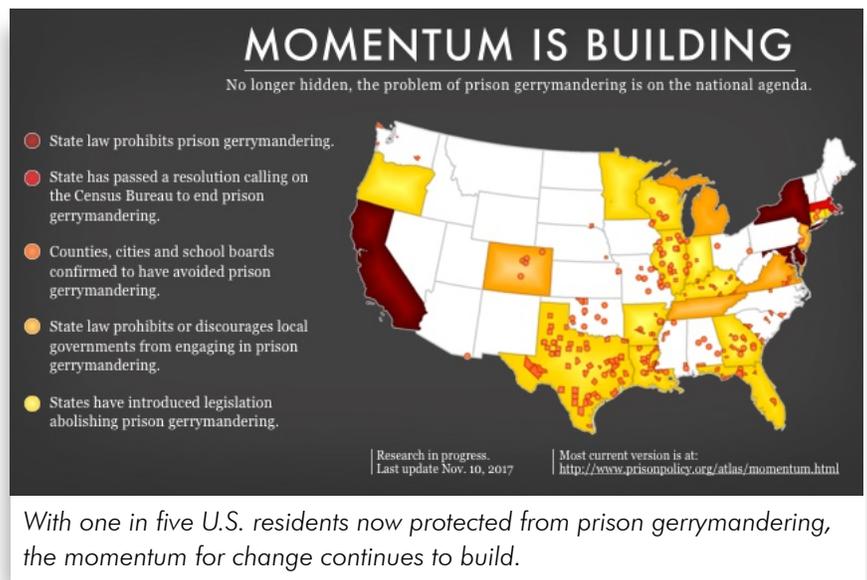
<https://www.prisonersofthecensus.org/>

The Census Bureau's practice of counting more than two million incarcerated people where they are imprisoned awards undue political clout to people who live near prisons at the expense of everyone else.

When our work began, no one knew what prison gerrymandering was, never mind how it distorts our democracy and criminal justice system. Today our work is sparking legislation, winning victories in the courts, and making the problem of prison gerrymandering a key issue for lawmakers, voting and civil rights advocates, researchers, and journalists.

This year's highlights:

- In February, the Census Bureau announced that it will continue to count incarcerated people in the wrong place in the 2020 Census. Fortunately, we were prepared for this (albeit disappointing) decision, and were able to immediately brief advocates and reform-minded state legislators with an **in-depth analysis**, as well as offer **model legislation to end prison gerrymandering at the state level**.
- Our press statement about the Bureau's announcement brought greater attention to the problem, and provided an outline of the work ahead for the next two years — namely, to push for **state-level legislation ending prison gerrymandering**, and to ensure that the Census follows through on promised publication timeline so that states can more easily avoid or minimize prison gerrymandering.
- We continue our work to end prison gerrymandering state by state in the legislatures. For example, legislative interest remains strong in **New Jersey** after Chris Christie vetoed the bill last year; new bills have been filed and our allies are optimistic that the reforms will fare better with the new governor.
- We continue to explain how prison gerrymandering impacts political representation and not federal funding, a common misconception that detracts from our efforts to eliminate this undemocratic practice.



Supporting our work

<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/donate/>

The generous support of visionary foundations and individual donors has allowed the Prison Policy Initiative to grow from the idea of three enterprising students in 2001 into an innovative and efficient policy shop at the forefront of the criminal justice reform movement in 2018.

Our work is supported by a handful of foundations and a small network of generous individuals who allow us to seize timely new opportunities, like our work to protect in-person family visits from the predatory video calling industry (p. 12), and to produce groundbreaking material that reshapes the movement for criminal justice reform, like our *Whole Pie* series (p. 4) which presents the now-essential big picture view of the disparate systems of confinement that make the U.S. the number one incarcerator in the world.

If you would like to join these donors, you can donate online or send a paper check to PO Box 127 Northampton, MA 01061.

If you are a current supporter of our work, we ask you to allow us to count on your support in the future by becoming a monthly sustainer. Just go to <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/donate/>, select an amount and then how often you'd like it to repeat.

And if you ever have any questions about how to support our work or how your gift is being used, please don't hesitate to contact Peter, Aleks, Wendy, Lucius, Jorge, Alexi or Wanda at (413) 527-0845.

We thank you for making our work — and our successes — possible.

Prison Policy Initiative budget report for 2017-2018 year

Income

Small Foundations	\$80,500
Large Foundations*	\$260,000
Individual Donors	\$289,126
Consulting	\$56,175
Honoraria	\$1,750
Interest	\$5,186
Total	\$692,738

Expenses

Salaries, benefits, employment taxes for 6 FTE staff	\$401,650
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Consultants

Graphic/information design	\$3,681
Research	\$6,890
Subtotal, consultants	\$10,571

Other expenses

Computer equipment	\$6,817
Insurance	\$2,577
Legal/Accounting services	\$1,895
Postage	\$3,328
Printing	\$405
Promotion & conference fees	\$1,981
Rent & utilities	\$11,195
Research tools	\$461
Staff development	\$1,135
Supplies	\$7,795
Taxes	\$394
Telephone, fax & internet service	\$3,358
Travel	\$7,123
Website & newsletter hosting	\$3,053
Subtotal, other expenses	\$51,517

Total **\$463,738**

*Several of these large foundation grants are for work that extend outside the current fiscal year.