

PRISON  
POLICY INITIATIVE

**2022-2023**  
ANNUAL REPORT

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*September 2023*

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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

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Dear friends,

Thank you for investing in our work. I'm honored to share this annual report reviewing — in our usual highly skimmable and visual form — the highlights and context of our work building a bigger, more engaging, and more powerful movement against mass incarceration.

One of the most exciting parts of leading the Prison Policy Initiative for two decades is seeing how this movement has grown. It has become stronger and more resilient, winning ever more complicated and difficult victories to reduce the number of people behind bars, improve prison and jail conditions, and make our communities safer. Thanks to organizing on both sides of the prison walls, the movement to shrink the carceral system gets stronger daily.

For years, one of the biggest obstacles to reform has been the flood of misinformation from politicians seeking power and corporations seeking profit. The facts, however, are on our side, and our movement is increasingly able to find and successfully wield those facts to change how people think about mass incarceration.

What the Prison Policy Initiative does best is find the facts that our movement needs and get them and the underlying moral story into the national discussion. I'm thrilled with what we accomplished this year, including:

- Putting a spotlight on how prisons and private companies are cutting the connections between incarcerated people and their families by eliminating physical mail — including birthday cards and photographs — and replacing it with shoddy, digital copies. (See p. 15.)
- Really expanding the national understanding that the criminal punishment system includes not just people in prison and jail but also probation, parole, and civil commitment (see p. 4-5, 10, and 16) and showing how the burdens of the criminal legal system fall disproportionately on disadvantaged communities. (See p. 6, 8-9, 10-11, 12, and 18.)
- Continuing to empower local activists with successful and proven strategies for pushing back with research and data when their county tries to build a bigger jail. (See p. 18.)
- Exposing an under-discussed but systematic flaw in the bail system in a report called “All profit, no risk,” that showed how the bail companies avoid any financial accountability in the rare cases when their “clients” fail to show up in court. (See p. 6.)

In addition to our publications, it's been exciting to see some of our specific campaigns win big and concrete gains this year, including:

- Two new states — Maine and Montana — joined the rapidly growing list of places that have ended prison gerrymandering. (See p. 13-14.)

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 State of Phone Justice report (and its 2019 predecessor) helped advocates secure victories that will bring down the cost of communications from prisons and jails, including the passage of the Martha-Wright Reed Just and Reasonable Communications Act. (See p. 7.)
- Seeds we planted in previous years, like our research on medical copays behind bars (see p. 12 last year and p. 11 the year before, and others), became policy when advocates in Nevada, the only state that did not suspend these fees at the onset of the COVID pandemic, passed legislation to eliminate them in the state permanently.

There is far more work to do, and I'm excited about what we will accomplish in the year ahead. We've added new senior staff, including Sarah Staudt as Director of our quickly growing Policy and Advocacy Department, and Brian Nam-Sonenstein, who is adding more capacity to our research department as a Senior Editor and Researcher. With these new leaders and more, we'll be able to publish even more hard-hitting analyses and provide more behind-the-scenes support for our allies.

I thank you for your support. I look forward to continuing to work alongside you in the fight for a better and more just world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Wagner', with a stylized, cursive script.

Peter Wagner  
Executive Director  
September 29, 2023

# Who we are

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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 team of interdisciplinary researchers and organizers shapes national reform campaigns from our remote workspaces and our headquarters in western Massachusetts.

## Staff

- Wanda Bertram, *Communications Strategist*
- Aleks Kajstura, *Legal Director*
- Brian Nam-Sonenstein, *Senior Editor & Researcher*
- Emmett Sanders, *Policy & Advocacy Associate*
- Wendy Sawyer, *Research Director*
- Danielle Squillante, *Development & Communications Associate*
- Sarah Staudt, *Policy & Advocacy Manager*
- Peter Wagner, *Executive Director*
- Leah Wang, *Research Analyst*
- Mike Wessler, *Communications Director*
- Emily Widra, *Senior Research Analyst*

## Consultants

- Emma Peyton Williams, *Editor & Researcher*
- Rachel Corey, *Research & Advocacy Consultant*
- Bill Cooper, *GIS*
- Bob Machuga, *Graphic Design*
- Jordan Miner, *Programming*
- Kevin Pyle, *Illustrations*

## Recent alumni

- Naila Awan, *Director of Advocacy*
- Jenny Landon, *Development Director*
- Stephen Rahe, *General Counsel*

\*Organizations for identification purposes only.

## Board of Directors\*

- Andrew Adams, *Treasurer*  
*Chief of Staff & Head of Strategic Communications,*  
*Planned Parenthood Mar Monte*
- Lucius Couloute, *President*  
*Sociology, Suffolk University*
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*Political Director, New York State Nurses Association*
- Sharon Cromwell, *Director*  
*Senior Strategist, Grassroots Power Project*
- Timothy Fisher, *Director*  
*Professor of Law, University of Connecticut School of Law*
- Laurie Jo Reynolds, *Clerk*  
*Policy advocate, researcher, and artist*
- Carrie Ann Shirota, *Director*  
*Policy Director, ACLU of Hawai'i*
- Paul Watterson, *Director*  
*Attorney*

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*City University of New York*
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*Department, Appeals Division*
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*Redistricting, The Campaign Legal Center*
- Joseph "Jazz" Hayden, *plaintiff, Hayden v. Pataki*
- Dale Ho, *Director of Voting Rights Project, ACLU*
- Daniel Jenkins, *democracy activist, plaintiff, Longway v.*  
*Jefferson*
- Eric Lotke, *attorney, researcher, and author*
- Bruce Reilly, *Formerly Incarcerated, Convicted People and*  
*Families Movement*
- Brigitte Sarabi, *Partnership for Safety and Justice*
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- Heather Ann Thompson, *Professor of History, University*  
*of Michigan*
- Janice Thompson, *Midwest Democracy Network*
- Angela Wessels
- Brenda Wright, *Demos: A Network for Ideas and Action*
- Rebecca Young, *Attorney*

# Empowering the movement with facts

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

*We develop powerful ways to illuminate the truth about mass incarceration, and use our data-driven analysis to make change.*

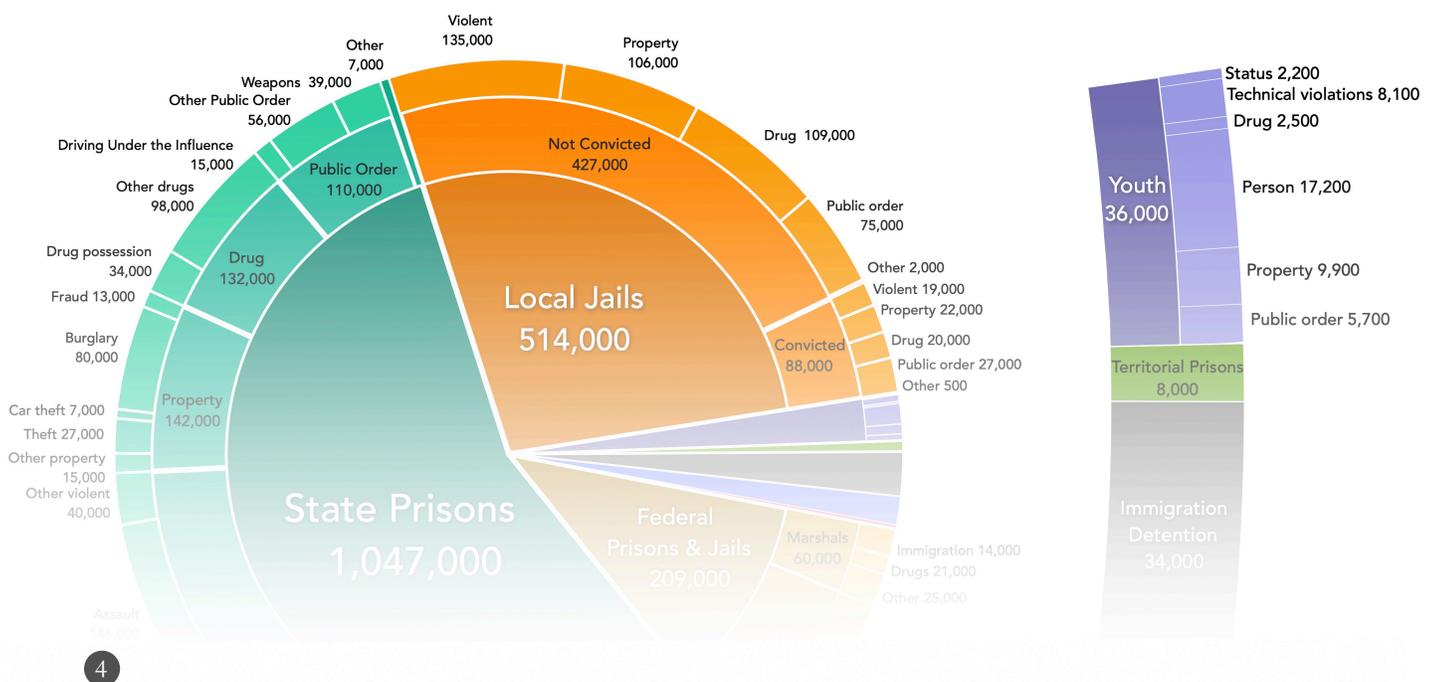
With creative research strategies, engaging graphics, and highly readable reports, we give organizers, advocates, and policymakers the facts they need to reform the criminal legal system and push for the end of mass incarceration. Highlights include:

## Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2023

The most recent edition of our flagship report provides the most comprehensive view of how many people are locked up in the U.S., in what kinds of facilities, and why. It pieces together the most recent national data on state prisons, federal prisons, local jails, and other systems of confinement to provide a snapshot of mass incarceration. With the criminal legal system returning to “business as usual,” the report also contextualizes the prison and jail population decreases that occurred during Covid and makes clear that populations are already beginning to rebound.

## How many people are locked up in the United States?

The U.S. locks up more people per capita than any other nation, at the staggering rate of 565 per 100,000 residents. But to end mass incarceration, we must first consider where and why 1.9 million people are confined nationwide.



## Women's Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2023

Our bedrock report on women's incarceration reveals how many women are locked up in the U.S., where, and why. The report examines the unique challenges women in the criminal legal system face and provides the clearest look at how the pandemic impacted women's incarceration in the U.S. One key finding is that more women are incarcerated in jails than in prisons, which is particularly alarming given how deadly jails can be for women.

## Punishment Beyond Prisons: Incarceration and supervision by state

1.9 million people are behind bars in the U.S., but this number doesn't capture the true reach of the criminal legal system in the country. Our report shows how the overuse of probation and parole, along with mass incarceration, has ensnared a staggering 5.5 million people in a system of mass punishment and correctional control.

**The Takeaway**  
 Stories Deep Dives Special Projects > **LISTEN FOR FREE** **SUPPORT US**

## Overincarcerating Women and Girls Can't Be What Healing Looks Like

**CAPITAL B** **BECOME A MEMBER**

### Recent Rise in Women and Girls Behind Bars Is Rooted in the War on Drugs

Christina Carrega 3:02 PM EST on Mar 1, 2023

**19th\***

### A comprehensive report on incarceration and women outlines the gender disparities

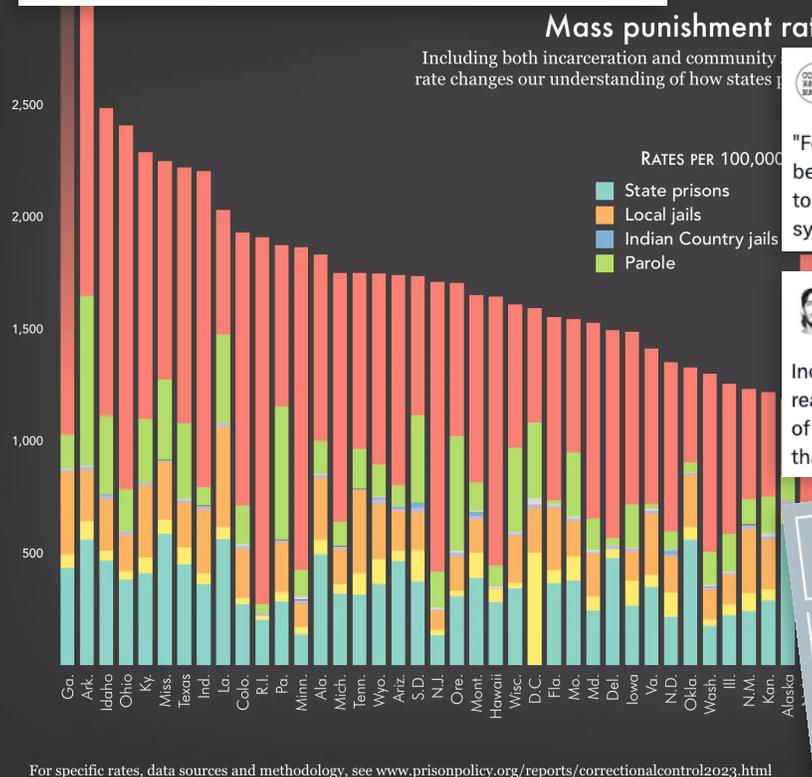
Candice Norwood  
 Breaking News Reporter

Published March 17, 2023, 8:26 a.m. PT

The Prison Policy Initiative looks at a fast-growing group in the incarceration system and the challenges they are more likely to face.

**#StopCopCity**  
 @micahinATL

Important and useful new research out from @PrisonPolicy



**CourtWatchMA**  
 @CourtWatchMA

"For example, Massachusetts, a so-called 'progressive' state that is below the national average of 566 per 100,000 residents when it comes to incarceration, seems much more punitive when you look at its full system of correctional control."

**Matt Sutton**  
 @MattSuttonEP

Incredibly important new report from @PrisonPolicy detailing the true reach of the US criminal legal system. Ppl often focus just on the amount of ppl incarcerated on any given day (1.9 mil), but it goes so much farther than that, denying millions more of their freedom every day.

**TEXAS OBSERVER** **JOIN**

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE**  
**LIFE WITH PAROLE**

Probation and parole systems remain understaffed and buggy in Texas.

by **MICHELLE PITCHER**  
 JUNE 15, 2023, 12:45 PM, CDT

**J**asmine Torres tried to answer the phone call, but cell service was poor at her factory job. Torres has been on a GPS ankle monitor since December 2021 as a condition of her parole, and the command center was the missed call with a month in jail.



## State of Phone Justice: The problem, the progress, and what's next

At a time when the cost of a typical phone call is approaching zero, why are incarcerated people and their families charged so much to stay in touch? In this report, we look at data from all 50 state prison systems and over 3,000 jails to understand how much families pay and how companies are finding new ways to price-gouge them through an expanding array of non-phone products. Shortly after we released this report, Congress passed and President Biden signed the Martha Wright-Reed Just and Reasonable Communications Act, which clarifies the FCC's authority to regulate phone and video calls from correctional facilities. In a subsequent briefing, we explained this new law is an important step — but the fight for phone justice is not over.

## SMH: The rapid & unregulated growth of e-messaging in prisons

To better understand the explosive growth in e-messaging behind bars, we examined all 50 state prison systems, as well as the Federal Bureau of Prisons, to see how common this technology has become, how much it costs, and what, if anything, is being done to protect incarcerated people and their families from exploitation. Our review found that, despite its potential to keep incarcerated people and their families connected, e-messaging has quickly become just another way for companies to profit at their expense.

# The high cost of staying in touch while incarcerated can linger long after release

By Roby Chavez

NEW ORLEANS — After serving 28 years in prison, Charles Amos walked out of Louisiana's Angola prison a free man. But since his release last year, he's felt the economic strain of costly prison phone calls to stay in touch with his incarcerated friends.

The 49-year-old spends \$150 each month for phone calls, as well as other means of communication like e-

The money, which gets deposited into his friends' phone accounts, has become a fixed cost, just like an electricity bill.

"Just like I don't forget to pay my bills so the lights don't go off, I'm not going to forget to send them money because I know how important that is," Amos said.

### Average phone rates for 15-minute increments in jails

Rates as of late 2021. The average jail charges about \$3 for a 15-minute call.

State	Rate
Wash	\$2.89
Mont	\$3.07
N.D.	\$3.14
Mont	\$3.10
Ill.	\$3.10
Wyo.	\$3.01
S.D.	\$3.15
Wisc.	\$3.00
Mich.	\$3.10
N.H.	\$3.14
N.Y.	\$2.60
Mass.	\$2.33
R.I.	\$3.35
N.J.	\$1.05
Md.	\$2.48
Pa.	\$2.91
Del.	\$1.79
W.V.	\$3.01
Ohio	\$3.01
Ind.	\$3.01
Ill.	\$3.01
Mo.	\$2.94
Kan.	\$2.94
Nebr.	\$2.86
Iowa	\$2.75
Wis.	\$3.02
Ill.	\$3.01
Ind.	\$3.01
Pa.	\$2.65
Del.	\$1.79
W.V.	\$3.01
Ohio	\$3.01
N.C.	\$3.01
W. Va.	\$2.87
Miss.	\$2.97
Ala.	\$2.86
Ga.	\$2.91
Fla.	\$2.68
Texas	\$2.93
Ark.	\$2.79
N.M.	\$2.37
Okla.	\$3.09
Ariz.	\$3.15
Calif.	\$2.03
Utah	\$2.87
Idaho	\$3.15
Wash.	\$2.89
Ore.	\$3.06
Mont.	\$3.07
N.D.	\$3.14
Mont.	\$3.10
Ill.	\$3.10
Wyo.	\$3.01
S.D.	\$3.15
Wisc.	\$3.00
Mich.	\$3.10
N.H.	\$3.14
N.Y.	\$2.60
Mass.	\$2.33
R.I.	\$3.35
N.J.	\$1.05
Md.	\$2.48
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Texas	\$2.93
Ark.	\$2.79
N.M.	\$2.37
Okla.	\$3.09
Ariz.	\$3.15
Calif.	\$2.03
Utah	\$2.87
Idaho	\$3.15
Wash.	\$2.89
Ore.	\$3.06
Mont.	\$3.07
N.D.	\$3.14
Mont.	\$3.10
Ill.	\$3.10
Wyo.	\$3.01
S.D.	\$3.15
Wisc.	\$3.00
Mich.	\$3.10
N.H.	\$3.14
N.Y.	\$2.60
Mass.	\$2.33
R.I.	\$3.35
N.J.	\$1.05
Md.	\$2.48
Pa.	\$2.91
Del.	\$1.79
W.V.	\$3.01
Ohio	\$3.01
Ind.	\$3.01
Ill.	\$3.01
Mo.	\$2.94
Kan.	\$2.94
Nebr.	\$2.86
Iowa	\$2.75
Wis.	\$3.02
Ill.	\$3.01
Ind.	\$3.01
Pa.	\$2.65
Del.	\$1.79
W.V.	\$3.01
Ohio	\$3.01
N.C.	\$3.01
W. Va.	\$2.87
Miss.	\$2.97
Ala.	\$2.86
Ga.	\$2.91
Fla.	\$2.68
Texas	\$2.93
Ark.	\$2.79
N.M.	\$2.37
Okla.	\$3.09
Ariz.	\$3.15
Calif.	\$2.03
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Wash.	\$2.89
Ore.	\$3.06
Mont.	\$3.07
N.D.	

# Uncovering disparities in the system

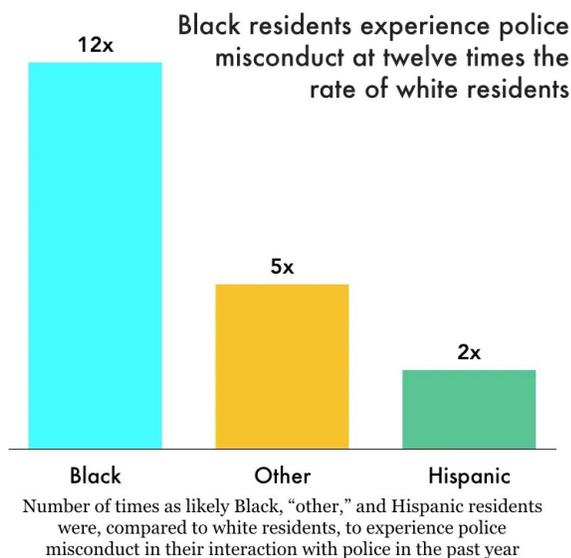
<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/racialjustice.html>

*Racial and socio-economic disparities plague the criminal legal system, but finding the facts can be difficult. We uncover the truth about who is incarcerated to make these disparities clear.*

Rather than delivering justice, the criminal legal system preys on people of color, poor people, LGBTQ+ people, and people who struggle with mental health or substance use. Using innovative research techniques, we lay bare the reality that marginalized, disadvantaged communities are the ones bearing the brunt of mass incarceration.

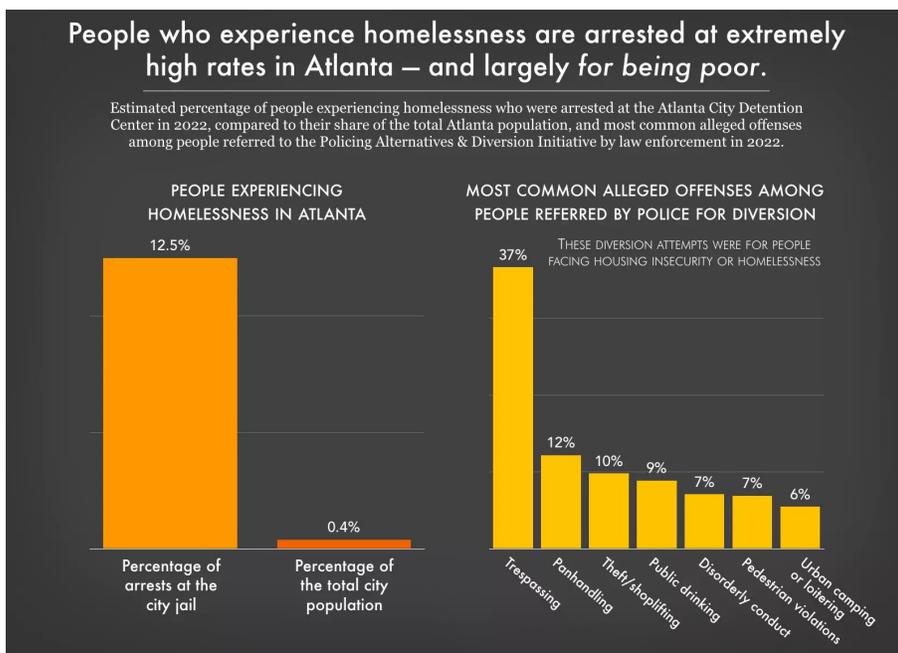
## New data: Police use of force rising for Black, female, and older people; racial bias persists

Our analysis of new survey data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics on police interactions in 2019 and 2020 shows that despite reduced contact with police overall, racial disparities in policing persist, and women are increasingly experiencing the threat or use of force by police.



## Unhoused and under arrest: How Atlanta polices poverty

Poor people in the United States are a primary target for policing, especially those forced to live on the streets. But just how many people who are unhoused are caught up in the thousands of arrests made in cities each year? We worked with Luci Harrell of the Atlanta Community Support Project on a short report showing that one in eight city jail bookings in Atlanta involve a person experiencing homelessness.



## Racial disparities in diversion: A research roundup

Research shows that diversion programs effectively reduce people's contact with the justice system and increase their access to social services. However, studies also suggest diversion is routinely denied to people of color, sending them deeper into the criminal legal system. We review the research and remind practitioners that most diversion programs aren't designed around racial equity — but should be.

## LGBT people across all demographics are at heightened risk of violent victimization

In this briefing, we highlight data showing that LGBT people — and particularly young adults, people of color, women, and bisexual people — are at heightened risk of violent victimization compared to their straight and cisgender counterparts.

## Profile of Native incarceration in the U.S.

Building off of our 50 “state profile” pages, we created a profile of Native incarceration in the U.S. to illuminate what data exists about the mass incarceration of Native people. We show that American Indian and Alaska Native people have high incarceration rates in jails and prisons compared with other racial and ethnic groups. In jails, Native people have more than double the incarceration rate of white people, and in prisons this disparity is even greater. Meanwhile, the juvenile justice system incarcerates Native youth at a rate higher than white, Hispanic, and Asian youth combined.

**KUNR** Donate

### Native people are overrepresented in state prisons across the Mountain West, report shows

KUNR Public Radio | By **Kaleb Roedel**

In Utah, Native people make up only 1% of all residents but 6% of all prisoners. Native people are also overrepresented in state prisons in [Idaho \(3.7% of prisoners\)](#), [Colorado \(3.4%\)](#) and [Nevada \(2.3%\)](#). In all three states, Native people make up 1.7% of the population.

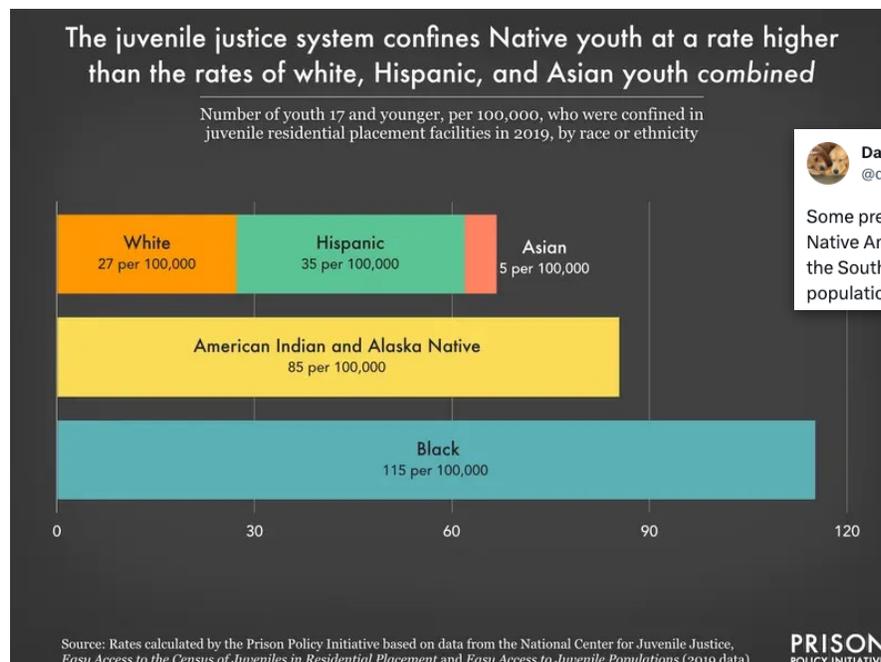
#### In six state prison systems, Native people are vastly overrepresented

Percent of population identified as American Indian/Alaska Native compared to the percent of each state's prison population that identifies as AI/AN, in the six states with the greatest disparities

State	State population (%)	Prison population (%)
Alaska	14%	40%
South Dakota	8%	36%
Montana	6%	24%
North Dakota	5%	25%
Wyoming	2%	7%
Utah	1%	6%

Mike Wessler, communications director at the Prison Policy Initiative said this raises the question of how these states approach issues like poverty, mental health, and substance use.

“Our nation, these states, have treated these as criminal problems to solve rather than economic challenges or health challenges that need to provide different solutions for,” Wessler said.



**David Menschel**  
@davidminpdx

Some pretty disturbing data about Native Americans in state prisons. Native Americans represent 40% of the Alaska prison population. 36% of the South Dakota prison population. And a quarter of the prison population in Montana and North Dakota.

# Exposing the public health crisis of mass incarceration

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

*We use data to explain why mass incarceration is always a public health crisis and advocate for policy reforms that address the differential health outcomes of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people.*

We publish critical resources that advocates, community leaders, lawmakers, and reporters need to demand that elected officials put public health before punishment, and prioritize saving the lives of justice-involved people. Highlights of our work include:

## Why states should change Medicaid rules to cover people leaving prison

Our briefing calls on states to make Medicaid available to individuals released from jail or prison, and highlights that people in prison disproportionately relied on Medicaid prior to incarceration. Research shows that expanding access to healthcare through Medicaid doesn't just save lives; it also reduces crime and arrest rates.

## How a Medicare rule that ends financial burdens for the incarcerated leaves some behind

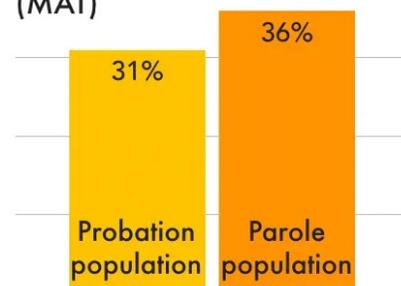
In this briefing, we explain how new Medicare enrollment rules that benefit incarcerated people don't go far enough; as a result, people released from prison before 2023 may still be stuck paying higher premiums for the rest of their lives.

## Mortality, health, and poverty: the unmet needs of people on probation and parole

Using unique survey data, we provide the most recent (and most skimmable) national estimates of the health needs of people on probation and parole. The data reveal that people under community supervision have high rates of substance use and mental health disorders and extremely limited access to healthcare, likely contributing to their high rates of mortality.

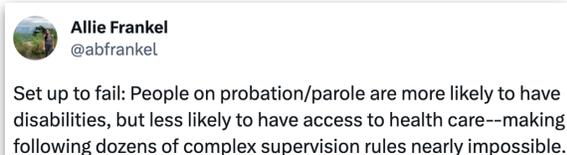


Only one-third of people on probation or parole who have opioid use disorder receive medication-assisted treatment (MAT)



Percent of people under community supervision with opioid use disorder who are receiving MAT

Source: NSDUH (2019)





# Measuring the impact of mass incarceration on families

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

*With the continued growth of women's incarceration, more and more families are experiencing the harmful impacts of mass incarceration. We use data to uncover how families are affected and highlight policies that keep them together.*

Through our data and research, we shine a light on how incarceration affects families and children beyond just the financial hardships they experience. We provide advocates with the messaging they need to win policy changes that recognize the role of incarcerated people as caregivers and the cascading effects of losing a parent to incarceration.

## Both sides of the bars: How mass incarceration punishes families

Millions of children throughout the country are punished emotionally, economically, and otherwise by a loved one's incarceration. In this briefing, we offer data and analysis revealing how prisons fail entire families — and engender lasting trauma — by separating children from their parents, with harmful policies that perpetuate cycles of poverty and disadvantage.

## How 12 states are addressing family separation by incarceration — and why they can and should do more

Our briefing assesses the legislative action taken by 12 states and the federal government to address the growing crisis of family separation by incarceration. All too often, incarceration destroys family bonds as parental rights are terminated or children end up in foster care. We explain how advocates across the country are fighting for creative and holistic solutions.

**NEW JERSEY MONITOR**

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOCIAL JUSTICE

### Incarcerating parents punishes families, watchdog group warns

BY: DANA DIFILIPPO - AUGUST 12, 2022 7:00 AM

About half of people in state prisons are parents to children under 18  
In fact, there are as many children with a parent in prison as there are adults in prison.

1,248,300 ADULTS IN STATE PRISONS NATIONWIDE  
= about 50,000 adults in prison

1,252,100 MINOR CHILDREN WITH A PARENT IN STATE PRISON  
= about 50,000 minor children

PRISON POLICY INITIATIVE

Prison Policy Initiative found that 1.25 million children nationally have an incarcerated parent, increasing their negative outcomes. (Dana DiFilippo | New Jersey Monitor)

More than one million children nationally have a parent in prison, and prisons make family visits difficult — even though family contact helps inmates cope behind bars and reduces their recidivism rates, according to a [new analysis](#) by the Prison Policy Initiative.

The childhood trauma that results from a parent's incarceration can echo through a child's life, increasing the child's odds of getting involved in the criminal justice system themselves and lost to foster or institutional care, the watchdog group warned.

Using federal data released in 2020, researchers found that almost half of people incarcerated in state prisons have children, and about 19% of those 1.25 million children are 4 or younger. Mothers are disproportionately impacted, partly because women are more likely to be in a single-parent household and be living with their children before their incarceration, the group found.

Prison Policy Initiative didn't provide state snapshots, but a 2016 [report](#) by the Annie E. Casey Foundation found about 65,000 children in New Jersey had an incarcerated parent.

entire families — and society more broadly — by separating millions of children from their parents, and by enforcing harmful policies that perpetuate cycles of poverty and disadvantage," wrote Leah Wang, the initiative's research analyst who authored

Almost half of people incarcerated in state prisons have children, and about 19%...are 4 or younger.



Nick Hudson @NickCHudson · Aug 11, 2022

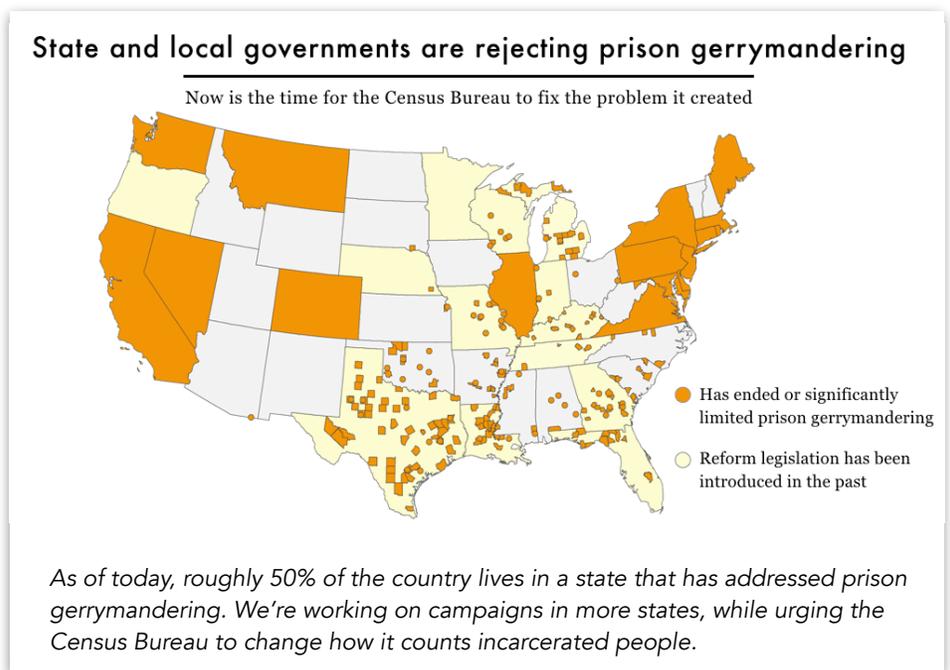
"...prisons fail entire families — and society more broadly — by separating millions of children from their parents, and by enforcing harmful policies that perpetuate cycles of poverty and disadvantage." Great briefing from @PrisonPolicy #txlege

# Protecting our democracy from mass incarceration by ending prison gerrymandering

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

*When states and local governments draw political districts using Census data that counts incarcerated people in prisons, they unintentionally enhance the representation of people who live near prisons while diluting the representation of everyone else.*

We launched the movement to end prison gerrymandering in 2001 and have been a national leader of this campaign ever since. Today our work is making this a key issue for lawmakers, voting and civil rights advocates, researchers, and journalists. As a result, over 200 local governments and over a dozen states have taken action to end the practice. Roughly half of U.S. residents now live in a state that has addressed prison gerrymandering, and momentum keeps growing this year with Maine and Montana passing legislation to end the practice.



## Advocates to Census Bureau: End prison gerrymandering in 2030

During the Census Bureau's first public comment period, we submitted a joint letter with 35 other criminal justice and voting-rights organizations, in which we called on the Census Bureau to finally count incarcerated people as residents of their homes instead of their prison cells.

## With unanimous, bipartisan support, Montana ends prison gerrymandering

This year, Montana joined the list of over a dozen states that have passed legislation to end prison gerrymandering. The state's bipartisan Districting and Appointment Commission also called on the Census



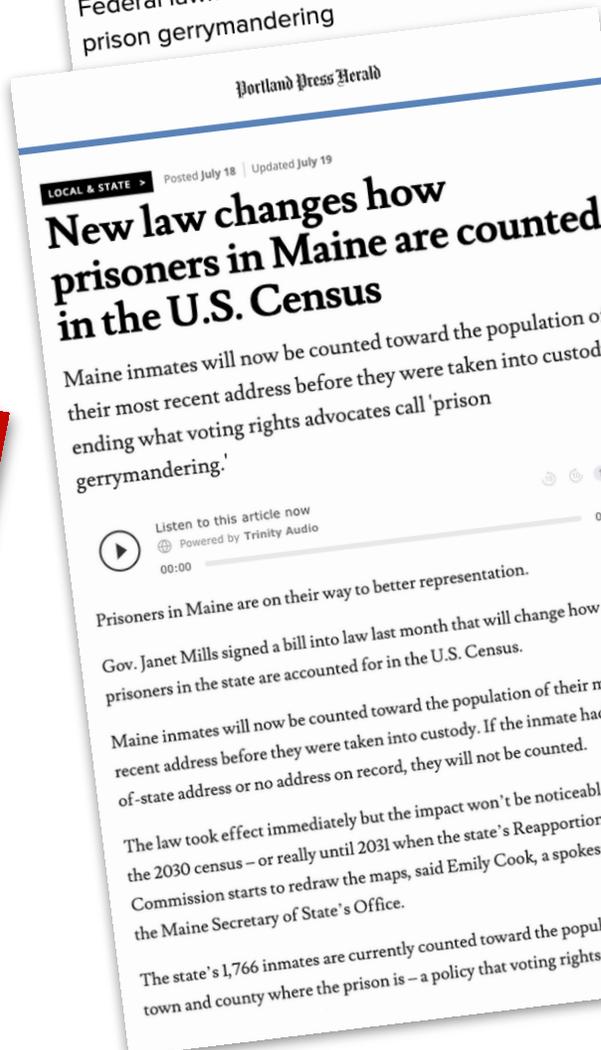
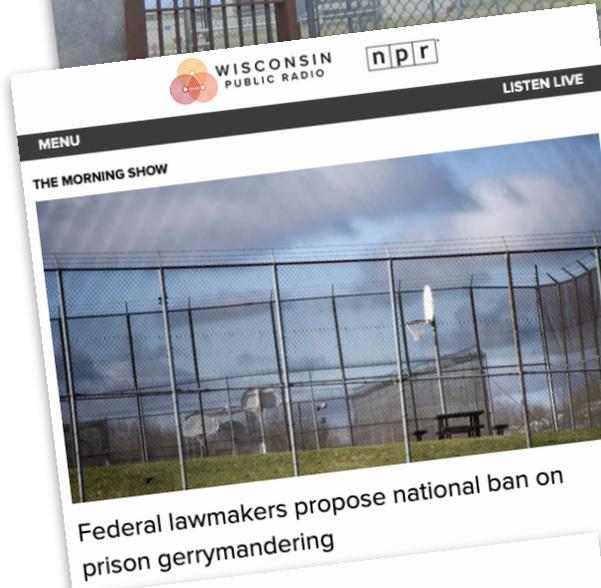
Bureau to count incarcerated people as residents of their home community, adding to the mounting pressure on the Bureau to change how it counts incarcerated people for the 2030 Census.

### Congresswoman Ross introduces bill to end prison gerrymandering nationwide

The bill would require the Census Bureau to count incarcerated people at their last known residence rather than their prison cell, which is where the Bureau currently counts them. The best way to solve this problem is for the Census Bureau to change its policies to count incarcerated people at home — something it can do today without legislation. However, this bill shows that should the agency fail to act, lawmakers in Congress are increasingly ready to force it to finally fix this problem.

### States to the Census Bureau: You created prison gerrymandering, you need to end it.

A new National Conference of State Legislatures report outlines the experiences and recommendations from states that implemented anti-prison gerrymandering reforms in the 2020 redistricting cycle. The main conclusion of the report: The Census Bureau is better situated to count incarcerated people at home, so why is it making states jump through so many hoops?



# Shining a light on the prison experience

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

*Contrary to popular belief, prisons are not rehabilitative. Our research reveals that rather than giving people opportunities to grow, prisons allow incarcerated people to languish inside — even subjecting them to forced “treatment” methods that have never been proven effective.*

## The state prison experience: Too much drudgery, not enough opportunity

In this briefing, we use a unique government dataset to examine daily life in state prisons — including jobs, programming, and discipline — revealing lost opportunities for rehabilitation, education, and hope. (For instance, we find that while most people in prison have jobs, 71% of those with jobs say they are required to work rather than choosing to.) Where possible, we include how this data breaks down along lines of race and gender, revealing how racial biases play out behind the walls.

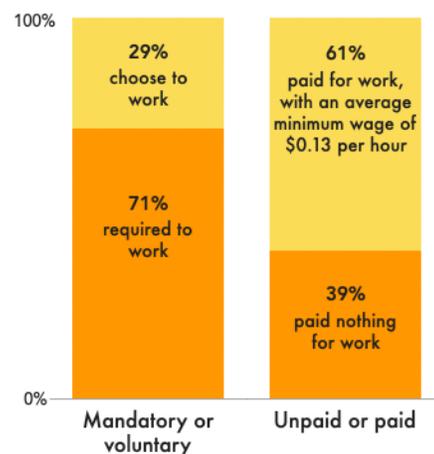
## Mail scanning: A harsh, exploitative new trend in prison

Mail — one of the most common ways incarcerated people keep in touch with their families, pursue education, correspond with support groups, and more — is going away in many prisons. In a recent briefing, we found that at least 14 state prison systems are banning physical mail and replacing it with often inferior scanned copies in a misguided attempt to curb contraband coming inside. We explain how this policy will hurt incarcerated people — while funneling money to private companies.

## Breaking news from inside: How prisons suppress prison journalism

In May, New York prison officials introduced a policy to effectively suppress prison journalism that went unnoticed until reporters at New York Focus caught wind of it. Building on data from the Prison Journalism Project, we find that most states enforce similar restrictions that make practicing journalism extremely difficult and sometimes risky.

Prison labor: Usually mandatory and often unpaid



## Incarcerated people must be at the forefront of Biden Administration and Federal Trade Commission efforts to end “junk fees”

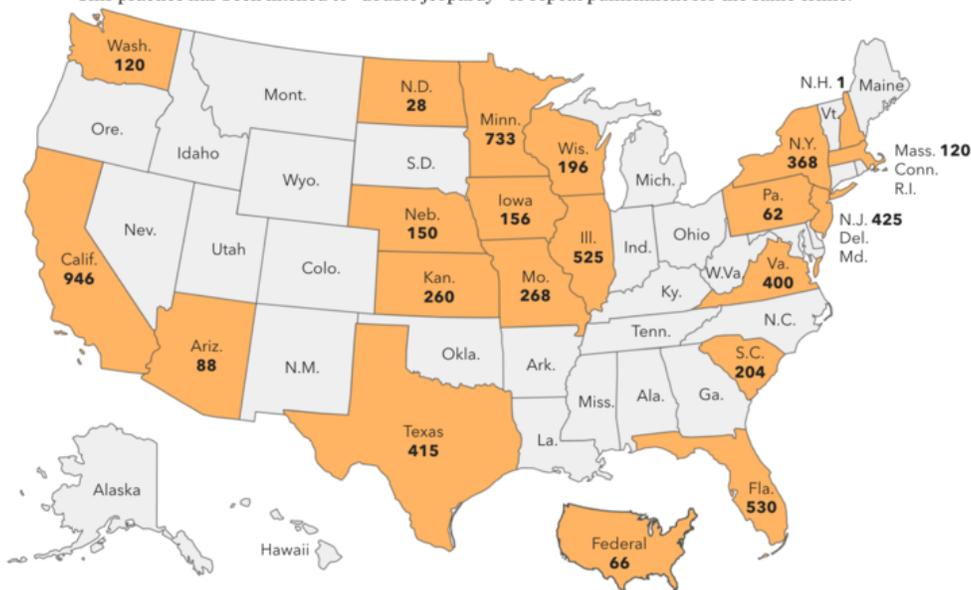
We joined the National Consumer Law Center and 27 other organizations to call on the Federal Trade Commission to crack down on abusive fees incarcerated people and their families are forced to pay. Because of their low incomes and uniquely constrained position as consumers, incarcerated people and their families are particularly vulnerable to financial exploitation and should be protected.

### What is civil commitment? Recent report raises visibility of this shadowy form of incarceration

Twenty states and the federal Bureau of Prisons detain over 6,000 people, mostly men, who have been convicted of sex offenses in prison-like “civil commitment” facilities beyond the terms of their criminal sentence. This deep dive into recently-published data from a survey of individuals confined in an Illinois civil commitment facility sounds the alarm about how these “shadow prisons” operate and the high rates of violence and trauma that people inside are subjected to.

## More than 6,000 people across 20 states were confined through punitive “civil commitment” systems in 2022

These states and the federal government have laws allowing the confinement of people convicted of sexual offenses in prison-like “treatment” facilities *after* completing their criminal sentences — often indefinitely. This practice has been likened to “double jeopardy” or repeat punishment for the same crime.



Data source: Sex Offender Civil Commitment Programs Network Annual Survey, 2022. Four jurisdictions did not participate in the 2022 survey: Nebraska's count is from 2018, New Hampshire's from 2020, South Carolina's from 2021, and the federal Bureau of Prisons' from 2017.



# Building a stronger justice reform movement

<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/trainings/> &  
<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/research.html>

*With data and research support, targeted policy solutions, and an eye for filling key messaging gaps, we're strengthening the work of local and state advocates, journalists, policymakers, and all those working to transform the legal system.*

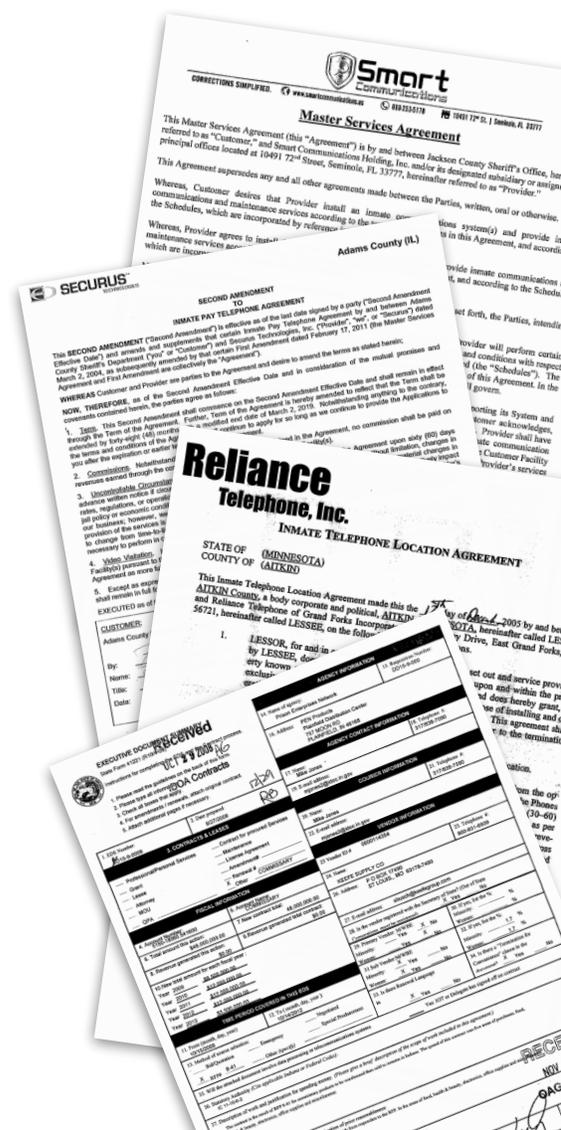
In addition to our own campaigns, we provide strategic support for the broader movement, building on lessons we've learned from our two decades of work to transform the criminal legal system. Highlights from our recent work include:

## Research Library

Our mission is to empower activists, journalists, and policymakers to shape effective criminal justice policy, so we go beyond our original reports and analyses to curate a database of virtually all the empirical criminal justice research available online. Our searchable Research Library contains 4,130 entries on issues ranging from racial disparities to sentencing policy to recidivism and reentry. In the last year, we've added 232 new entries with the most recent cutting-edge research. You can get the newest additions delivered right to your email inbox by signing up at [www.prisonpolicy.org/subscribe](http://www.prisonpolicy.org/subscribe).

## Correctional Contracts Library

Our Contracts Library contains hundreds of contract documents to help advocates identify and combat the exploitation of incarcerated people and their families. Through our work to expose and stop the abusive practices of private companies, we've amassed a collection of contracts, bids, evaluations, and more, which provide a paper trail showing how for-profit companies work with jails and prisons to squeeze money out of people who can least afford it. Our collection is now publicly available through this new tool. In addition, we recently added new functionality to enable journalists and activists to add their own documents to the library.



## Winnable criminal justice reforms in 2023

On the heels of an election in which voters rejected fear-tactics and scare-mongering about crime and criminal justice reform, we released our annual list of criminal justice reforms that are ripe for victory in the upcoming legislative sessions. To maximize the impact of this report, we mailed it to over 700 state legislators across the country who have a track record of advancing criminal justice reforms in their state.

### Winnable criminal justice reforms

*A Prison Policy Initiative briefing on promising state reform issues for 2023*

**PRISON**  
POLICY INITIATIVE  
<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/>

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## Expanding our toolkit for advocates in counties with plans to build new jails

When counties discuss building or expanding their jails, they often commission “jail assessments” to analyze current operations and recommend new construction. These assessments are usually dense, but riddled with obvious flaws. We developed a guide to help activists understand these documents and push back on jail construction proposals. To help publicize this resource, our Advocacy Department organized a webinar — bringing together activists from Building Justice in Berks, Families for Justice as Healing, and the National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls to discuss strategies they employed to prevent new jails from being built. To ensure that advocates across the country can access these resources, we made them publicly available as part of our Advocacy Toolkit.



Over 100 local activists and members of the public attended our Fighting Jail Expansion Webinar, where veterans of successful fights against jail expansion shared their strategies.

## How your local public housing authority can reduce barriers for people with criminal records

Millions of people with criminal records likely meet the income eligibility requirements for public housing assistance. But needlessly strict local policies lock them out of housing. We explain how your public housing authority may be needlessly exclusionary and provide recommendations for how local advocates can make important changes in how their local public housing authorities set, interpret, define, and measure criteria for denial.

**NEXT CITY** Solutions for Liberated Cities [LOGIN](#) [JOIN](#)

## HUD Excludes People With Convictions From Public Housing. Local Solutions Can Help.

Policy changes by local public housing authorities can be transformative for Americans with convictions, and for their families.

**ROSHAN ABRAHAM** APRIL 13, 2023

**T**he housing crisis is particularly acute for [the 79 million Americans with a criminal record](#): People with convictions are [nearly 10 times more likely](#) to experience homelessness compared to the general public. While federally subsidized housing could provide support to these individuals, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) contributes to the problem by permitting each public housing authority (PHA) wide leeway to discriminate against people with convictions.

But some advocates have successfully gotten their local PHAs to change course: [A 2016 policy change in New Orleans](#) has been able to open up public housing for people with convictions by providing a clearer rubric for PHAs to use during screenings and appointing a board to review applications.

Barring sweeping federal rule changes, this local approach is the only one open to advocates. In February, Prison Policy Initiative [published a report](#) titled “How Your Local Public Housing Authority Can Reduce Barriers For People With Criminal Records.” The report provides a framework for interrogating local PHAs to see how they are interpreting federal

[SHARE](#)

## A bare-bones guide to lowering your local jail's phone rates

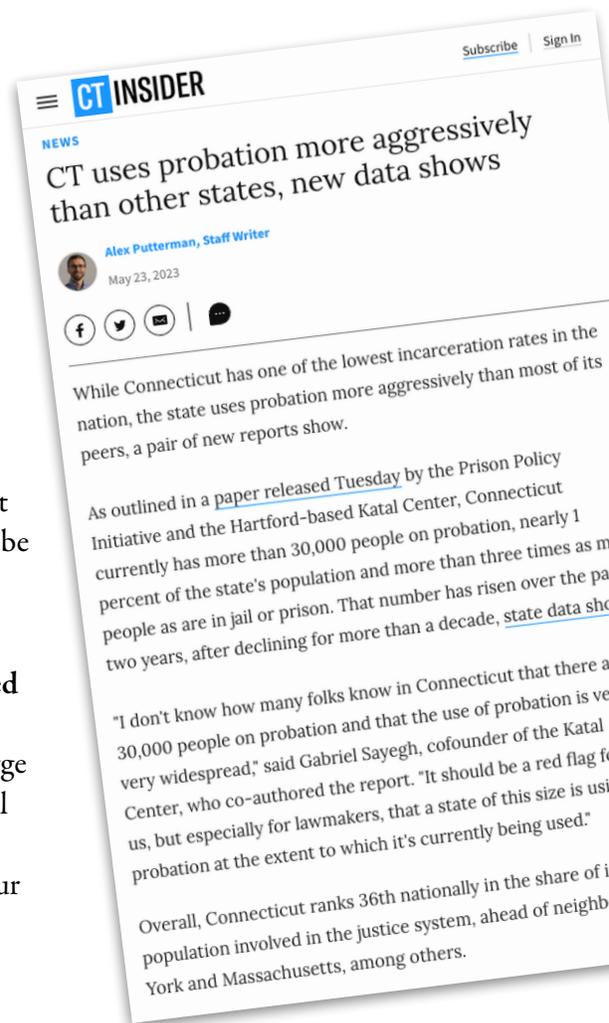
We put together a guide to help organizers and activists build campaigns to pressure policymakers in their communities to lower the cost of calls home from jails — or, better yet, stop charging incarcerated people and their families for calls altogether.

## Excessive, unjust, and expensive: Fixing Connecticut's probation and parole problems

While radical reforms to probation and parole are warranted, a handful of modest reforms have the potential to quickly shrink the number of people under supervision and even to release significant numbers of people from incarceration. Our report lays out a blueprint for meaningful probation and parole reform in Connecticut that can be easily replicated in other states.

## Contending with Carveouts: How and Why to Resist Charge-Based Exclusions in Reforms

It is common for legislators to “carve out” from a proposed reform large numbers of people because of their offense type or another categorical reason, but this watering down of reform is not necessary and can be successfully avoided if advocates push back. Our recent addition to our Advocacy Toolkit provides data and messaging support for advocates and policymakers pushing for criminal legal system reform that does not exclude people with serious charges.



## Criminal legal system reforms that exclude people based on charge



**laura whitehorn**  
@laurawhitehorn

I urge every lawmaker and every advocate to read this short, valuable paper by @PrisonPolicy [prisonpolicy.org/trainings/carv...](https://prisonpolicy.org/trainings/carv...) Great data and analysis - should be familiar to those who follow @RAPPcampaign and/or want to upend the racist punishment system

**Keith Wattley**  
@Keith\_Wattley

The people left behind in prison often present the least risk but face the most stigma and discrimination.

We found states that single out violent offenses:

- Block access to alternatives to incarceration
- Restrict opportunities for release
- Withhold relief from collateral consequences
- Impose two or more of these restrictions

# Supporting our work

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

The Prison Policy Initiative is known for delivering big results on a small budget. Since our founding in 2001, we've grown into an innovative and efficient policy shop at the forefront of the criminal justice reform movement.

Alongside foundation partners, our work is supported by a network of generous individuals who allow us to produce groundbreaking material that reshapes the movement for criminal justice reform.

We welcome you to join our community of supporters working to end mass incarceration. To contribute to our work, you can donate online at [prisonpolicy.org/donate](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/donate) or send a paper check to PO Box 127 Northampton, MA 01061.

If you have any questions about how to contribute or how we would put your financial support to use, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at 413-527-0845 ext. 306.

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

*“Thank you for your important work. We know that structural poverty and racism determine much of who winds up in our jails and prisons. Seeing the facts in black-and-white is very helpful for our work as criminal injustice system activists.”*

*- Micky Duxbury, donor since 2022*

*“Thank you (T'igwucid in Coast Salish Lushootseed) for all you do to end our inhumane and criminally carceral U.S. system. In particular, I say T'igwucid for ensuring that American Indians/Alaska Native incarceration is addressed and data included in your research and reporting. Lifting my hands in gratitude.”*

*- Kyle Taylor Lucas, donor since 2020*

*“I depend on your deep research in so many ways as an artist and as someone doing **legislative campaign work** and education about prison abolition. Thank you, thank you!”*

*- Jo Kreiter  
Donor since 2018*

# Prison Policy Initiative budget report for 2022-2023 year

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## Income

### Grants & Gifts

Large Foundations*	\$1,874,700
Individual Donors and small foundations	\$500,939

### Earned Revenue

Honoraria and consulting fees	\$15,943
Interest	\$62,584

**Total Income** **\$2,454,166**

## Expenses

Salaries and benefits, including fringe	\$1,307,178
Consultants	\$29,619
Computers	\$6,826
Rent	\$13,713
Supplies	\$5,400
Internet hosting, telephone, etc.	\$7,157
Printing and postage	\$6,961
Travel	\$8,199
Other (Accounting, Bank charges, insurance, Dues, Taxes, Advertising, Research tools, FOIA fees, Staff development)	\$18,819

**Total Expenses** **\$1,403,872**

\*Several of these foundation grants are for work that extends outside of the fiscal year and/or for long-term expansion of our work.