

PRISON
POLICY INITIATIVE

2025-2026

ANNUAL REPORT

September 2026

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“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

Executive Director's letter

Dear friends,

This year marks 25 years since I co-founded the Prison Policy Initiative.

The world has changed dramatically since then. When we started this organization, criminal justice reform was not a topic taken seriously by most politicians and people in power. They still saw metal bars and cages as the only response to crime.

We launched this organization to change that. At that pivotal moment, we had two goals in mind. First, to educate the public at-large about the ways America's failed experiment with mass incarceration is making their lives worse. Second, to win concrete policy victories that make the criminal legal system smaller and less unjust.

I'm proud to say that, over the last 25 years, working alongside our friends in this growing movement, we have accomplished big things, including:

- The 2014 launch of our now-annual flagship report, *Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie*, showed, for the first time ever, the full scope of the carceral system in America. It made the nation's mass incarceration crisis clear to see, and impossible to ignore. (pg. 4)
- The price of phone calls from a prison or jail — while still far too high — has dropped dramatically, ensuring incarcerated people can maintain connection to their loved ones on the outside, without digging them deep into debt.
- Prison gerrymandering — a problem that unfairly gives prison towns more political power — was the first issue we championed. With our leadership, it has gone from a niche issue, to one of the most talked about areas of redistricting reform. (pg. 17)

Unfortunately, this work is far from over. Today, we're once again seeing some elected officials, desperate to detract from their own failures, reimplement the same harsh policies that created the nation's mass incarceration crisis.

This annual report highlights how, despite this difficult climate, we continue to make progress by producing cutting-edge research that helps advocates on the ground secure key policy victories:

- We published an in-depth report that showed, for the first time ever, how local jails are a key part of President Trump's detention and deportation agenda, along with a guide on how people can push back on this, in their local community. (pg. 7)
- We updated our groundbreaking report, *Following the Money of Mass Incarceration*, with new data and graphics, that showed that, despite historic drops in crime, spending on the criminal legal system — especially the bloated budgets of militarized federal agencies — has grown dramatically. (pg. 4)

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.

- We produced a comprehensive two-part report on discretionary parole systems that show how these critical systems for decarceration, all too often, go underused, and deny parole applications based on factors that are beyond a person's control. (pg. 11)

Beyond our research, though, this report details how, we are evolving to meet the ever-changing ways that advocates access and take action on our work:

- Over the last year, we've provided in-depth research support to advocates in 35 states, which, among other things, led to legislation prohibiting collaboration with federal immigration agencies. (pg. 19)
- We've become national leaders in the effort to get our research into the hands of incarcerated activists and journalists to support their work advocating for change on their own behalf. (pg. 21)
- And we've begun to network and support content creators who produce high-impact videos that expose the harms of the carceral system. (pg. 22)

As we mark 25 years since our founding, we remain just as committed to ending mass incarceration in America. And with the expertise, creativity, and network we've built over this time, I'm confident we will succeed.

Thank you for your support over the last quarter-century, and for your ongoing support as we work to win this fight, once and for all.

Sincerely,

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

Peter Wagner
Executive Director
September 22, 2026

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 team of interdisciplinary researchers and organizers shapes national reform campaigns from our remote workspaces.

Staff

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

Volunteers and student interns

- Maria Wilkinson, *University of New Hampshire Franklin Pierce School of Law*
- Stephen Raher, *Attorney and Researcher*
- Miriam Vishniac, *Founder and President of The Prison Flow Project*

Consultants

- Bill Cooper, *GIS*
- Bob Machuga, *Graphic Design*
- Jordan Miner, *Programming*
- Orion Taylor, *Jail Data Initiative, Data Analysis*
- Alpha Jalloh, *Creator-in-Residence*

Board of Directors*

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Chief of Staff & Head of Strategic Communications,
Planned Parenthood Mar Monte
- Paul Watterson, *Treasurer*
Attorney
- Tracy Velazquez, *Clerk*
Policy Director for the Council for Court
Excellence
- Peter Wagner
Executive Director of the Prison Policy Initiative

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- Nora V. Demleitner
- Amy Fetting
- Alex Friedmann
- Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Earth and Environmental Sciences, City University of New York*
- Barbara Graves-Poller, *City of Kingston, New York*
- Ruth Greenwood, *Professor and Director of the Election Law Clinic, Harvard Law School*
- 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, *Founder, Partnership for Safety and Justice*
- Jason Stanley, *Professor of American Studies, University of Toronto*
- Heather Ann Thompson, *Professor of History, University of Michigan*
- Janice Thompson
- Angela Wessels
- Brenda Wright, *NAACP Legal Defense Fund*
- Rebecca Young, *Attorney*

*Organizations for identification purposes only.

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.

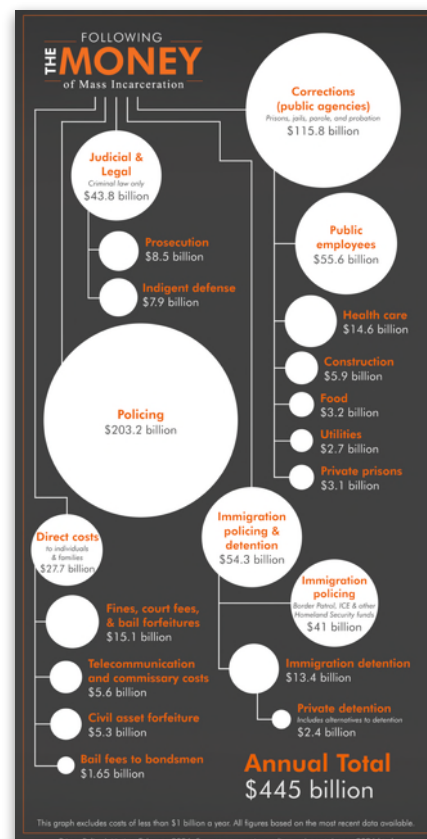
With creative research strategies, engaging graphics, and highly readable reports, we give organizers, advocates, and policymakers the facts they need to reform the criminal legal system and push for the end of mass incarceration. Highlights include:

Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2026

The latest edition of our flagship report provides a detailed look at where and why people are locked up in the U.S., and dispels some common myths about mass incarceration to focus attention on overlooked issues that urgently require reform. It also includes a high-level look at changes to confined populations over the past few years.

Following the Money of Mass Incarceration 2026

The costs of funding the police — especially the bloated budgets of militarized federal agencies in the Department of Homeland Security — have become a recurring theme in discussions about criminal legal system policy. At the same time, crime has declined and fewer people are incarcerated, yet spending on the criminal legal system has still increased faster than inflation. In an update to our 2017 report, we find that the broad system of mass incarceration costs the government and families of system-involved people at least \$445 billion every year.



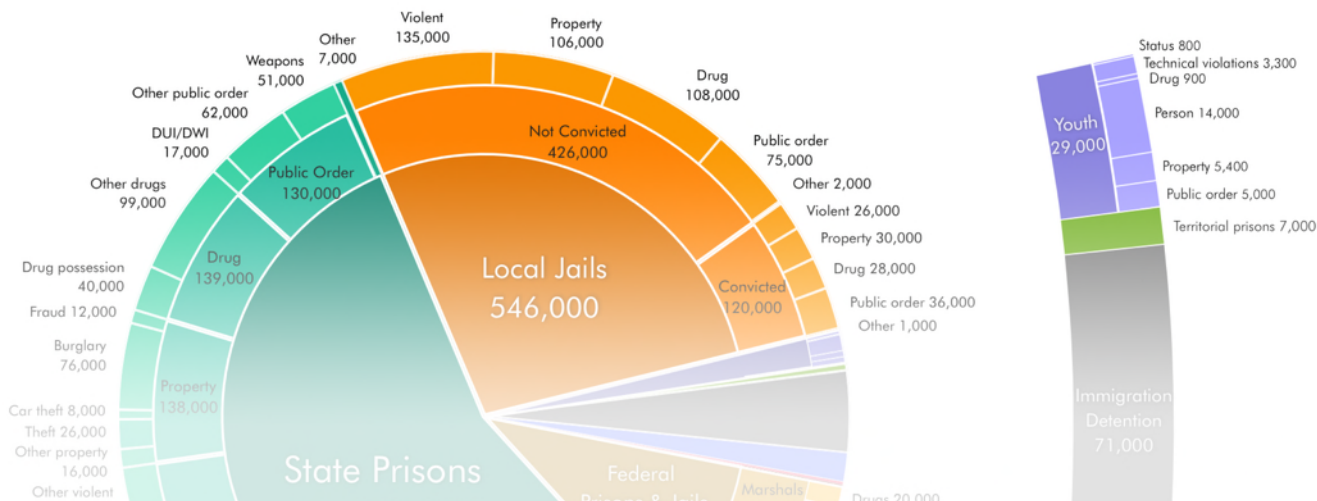
Dylan Hayre
@dylanhayre.bsky.social

The mom paying for calls to her incarcerated son instead of groceries for herself. The dad living houseless—he owes more in [#finesandfees](#) debt than he'll ever make. Families sacrificing basic needs.

\$27.7 billion of harm. Why? Because the system prioritizes revenue over justice. [@prisonpolicy.org](#)

How many people are locked up in the United States?

The U.S. locks up more people per capita than any other independent democracy, at the staggering rate of 580 per 100,000 residents. But to end mass incarceration, we must first consider *where* and *why* nearly 2 million people are confined nationwide.

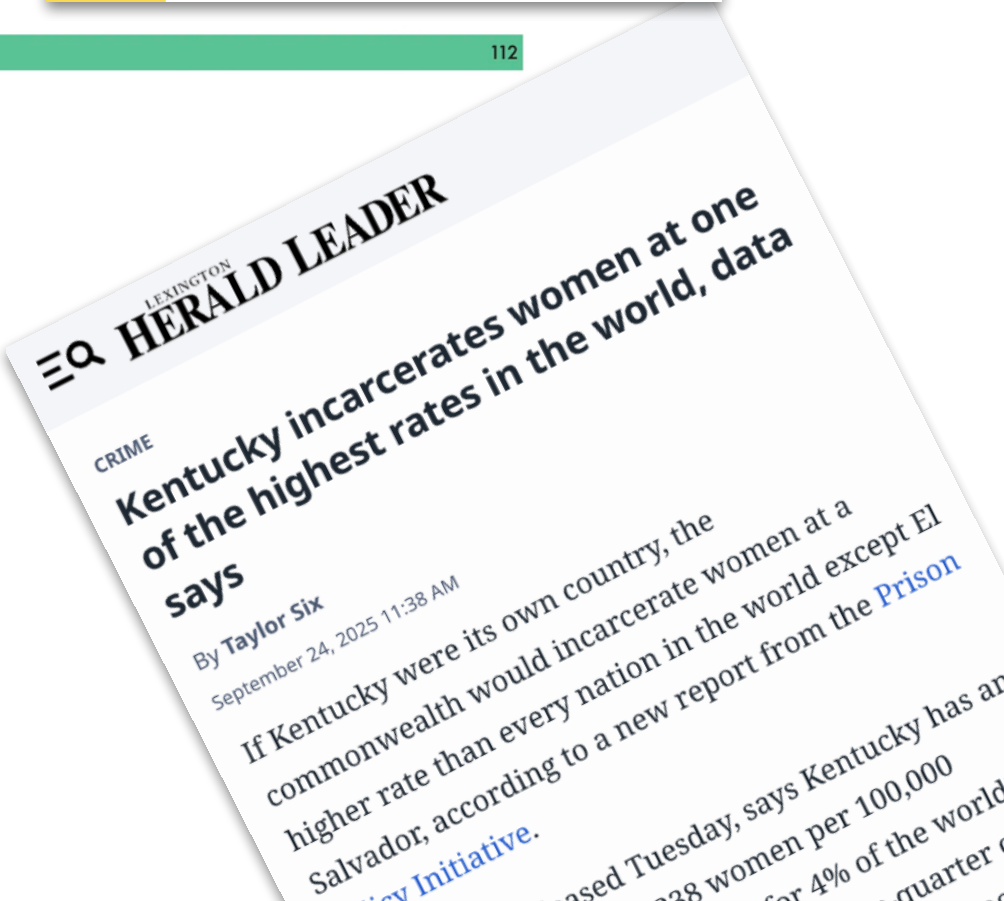
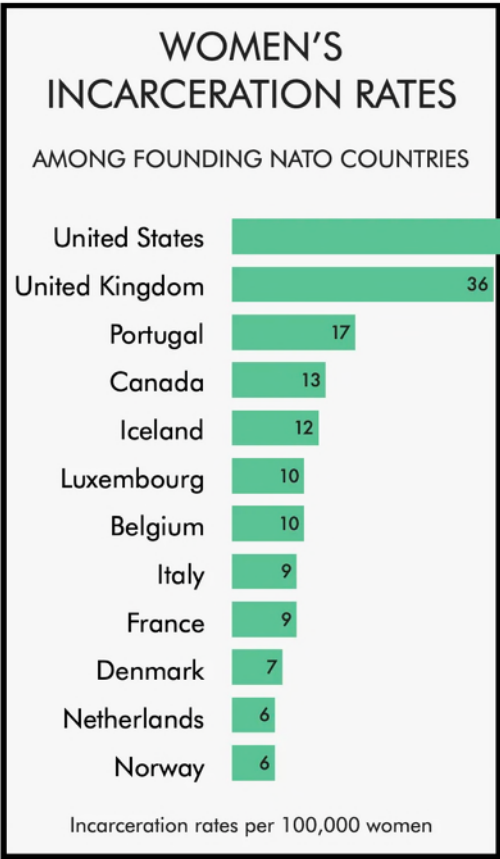
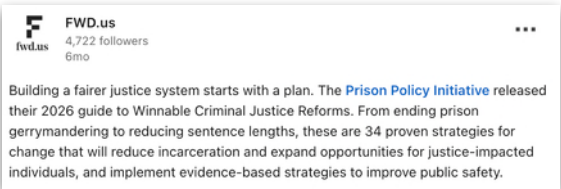


Winnable criminal justice reforms in 2026

We released our annual list of high-impact policy ideas for state legislators and advocates who are looking to reform their criminal legal system without making it bigger. In this year’s guide to winnable criminal legal reforms, we’ve added new information about parole reform around the country, and updated all of our sections with new example bills and resources where you can learn more about the wide range of reforms we have seen across the country in recent years.

States of Women’s Incarceration: The Global Context 2025

Our updated report provides a comprehensive women’s incarceration rate for every U.S. state — including prisons and jails, youth confinement facilities, tribal jails, immigrant detention centers, and other types of incarceration — comparing states to each other and to countries of the world. Most states, the report shows, incarcerate women at more than double the rates of our international peers.



Youth Confinement: The Whole Pie 2025

In the past 25 years, the number of youth confined in facilities away from home as a result of juvenile or criminal legal system involvement has dropped significantly. But while the juvenile system's shift from carceral punishment to more community-based responses to law- and rule-breaking behavior offers lessons for the broader criminal legal system, our analysis of the most recent data shows this work is far from complete. This report provides a snapshot of how many system-involved youth are confined, where they are held, under what conditions, and for what offenses.

Research Library

Our mission is to empower activists, journalists, and policymakers to shape effective criminal legal policy, so we go beyond our original reports and analyses to curate a database of virtually all the empirical criminal legal research available online. Our searchable Research Library contains 4,721 entries on issues ranging from mental health, women's incarceration, to pretrial detention. It often serves as a reference for journalists doing criminal legal reporting. In the last year, we've added 200 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.



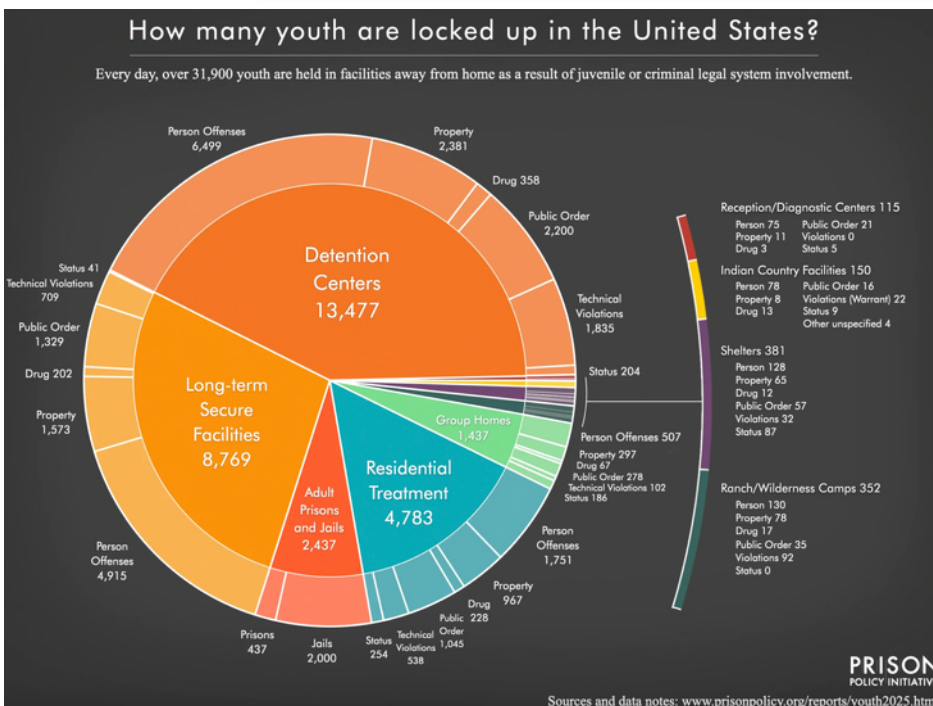
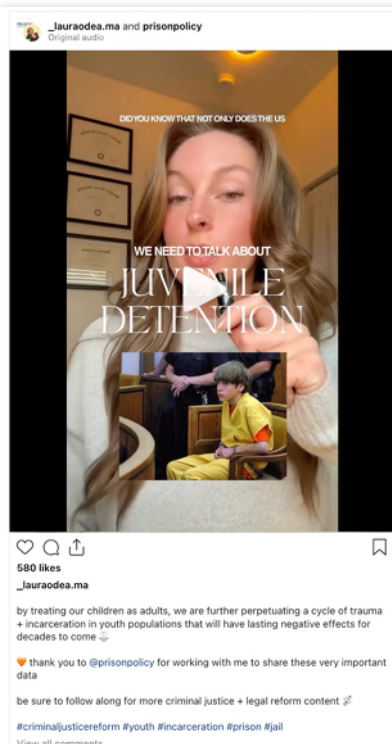
OPINION

Stop putting Pennsylvania's children behind bars for petty offenses | PennLive Editorial

Updated: Oct. 04, 2025, 10:44 a.m. | Published: Oct. 03, 2025, 3:30 p.m.

[Pennsylvania locks up far more youth](#) than many other states and almost twice as many as a comparable state like Illinois. That's according to a recently released [report](#) from the Prison Policy Initiative (PPI).

Wanda Bertram and Brian Nam-Sonenstein from the Prison Policy Initiative (PPI) met with PennLive's Editorial board to provide some of the stunning statistics from its "Youth Confinement: The Whole Pie 2025" report.



Responding to the moment

We produce publications and tools that help advocates, journalists, and the public make sense of current events and their impact on the size and scope of the carceral system.

Last year, we released several publications and tools designed to help the public make sense of the Trump administration's efforts to make the criminal legal system harsher, less effective, and even more unfair. This year, we continued to shine a spotlight on the ways that the federal government is ratcheting up efforts to criminalize immigrants and other vulnerable populations — and what advocates can do to push back. Highlights include:

Hiding in Plain Sight: How local jails obscure and facilitate mass deportation under Trump

Local jails, even in some sanctuary cities and states, are playing an essential role in President Trump's mass detention and deportation plan. This report breaks down the complicated overlap between local criminal legal and immigration systems, and offers detailed data tables showing the level of involvement in every state and in specific jails. It also reveals that the Trump administration is circumventing city and county sanctuary policies by referring immigrants to the shadowy U.S. Marshals Service, whose contracts with jails to hold pretrial detainees have often gone overlooked.



BLACK PRESS

Trump Exploits Jail Contracts to Skirt Sanctuary Policies, Supercharge Deportations, New Report Shows

BLACKPRESSUSA NEWSWIRE — A new report from the Prison Policy Initiative reveals how President Donald Trump's administration is driving mass deportation by secretly using local jails—even in places with sanctuary policies—to detain immigrants.

Published 12 months ago on July 30, 2025
By [Stacy M. Brown](#)

A new report from the Prison Policy Initiative reveals how President Donald Trump's administration is driving mass deportation by secretly using local jails—even in places with sanctuary policies—to detain immigrants. The report, [Hiding in Plain Sight: How Local Jails Obscure and Facilitate Mass Deportation Under Trump](#), details how these local facilities, through contracts with the U.S. Marshals Service, have become a critical infrastructure in Trump's deportation strategy.

Building on the organization's previous work explaining how county jails enable state and federal incarceration, this latest analysis breaks down the overlap between local criminal justice systems and federal immigration enforcement. The report also provides extensive data tables showing the level of involvement in every state and in over 600 specific jails. "The Trump administration is circumventing city and county sanctuary policies that limit cooperation with federal immigration authorities," the report said. "It accomplishes this through a longstanding loophole: ICE and other federal agencies can refer people for federal prosecution on immigration-related 'crimes' and thus use local jails' contracts with the U.S. Marshals Service in sanctuary cities, counties, and states." This strategy, according to the report, turns civil immigration matters into criminal cases, thereby allowing the federal government to detain people in local jails even where sanctuary laws are on the books. As a result, local communities

truthout

NEWS | IMMIGRATION

Local Jails Play Integral Role in Mass Deportation, Report Says

A new report finds that local jails are feeding thousands of people to Trump's deportation machine.

By Elizabeth Weill-Greenberg, TRUTHOUT

July 31, 2025

Local jails play an integral role in the Trump administration's efforts to abduct, detain and deport millions of immigrants, according to a new report from the research and advocacy group Prison Policy Initiative (PPI).

PPI says that from January 20 to June 26, almost half of all ICE arrests involved people who were detained at a local jail, typically accused of minor offenses, such as driving without a license.



Septima P. Snark

@drsubini.blacksky.app

@prisonpolicy.org is doing SUCH IMPORTANT work on the connections between the kidnapping of our neighbors via ICE and DHS and local police and jails.

Please follow them, read their work, signal boost, and support them whenever you can.



Report: U.S., Florida immigration detention numbers are much higher than ICE stats

WLRN Public Media | By [Jake Shore](#)
Published August 7, 2025 at 1:00 PM EDT

The scale of immigration detention in the U.S. is significantly larger than previously known, a recent report contends.

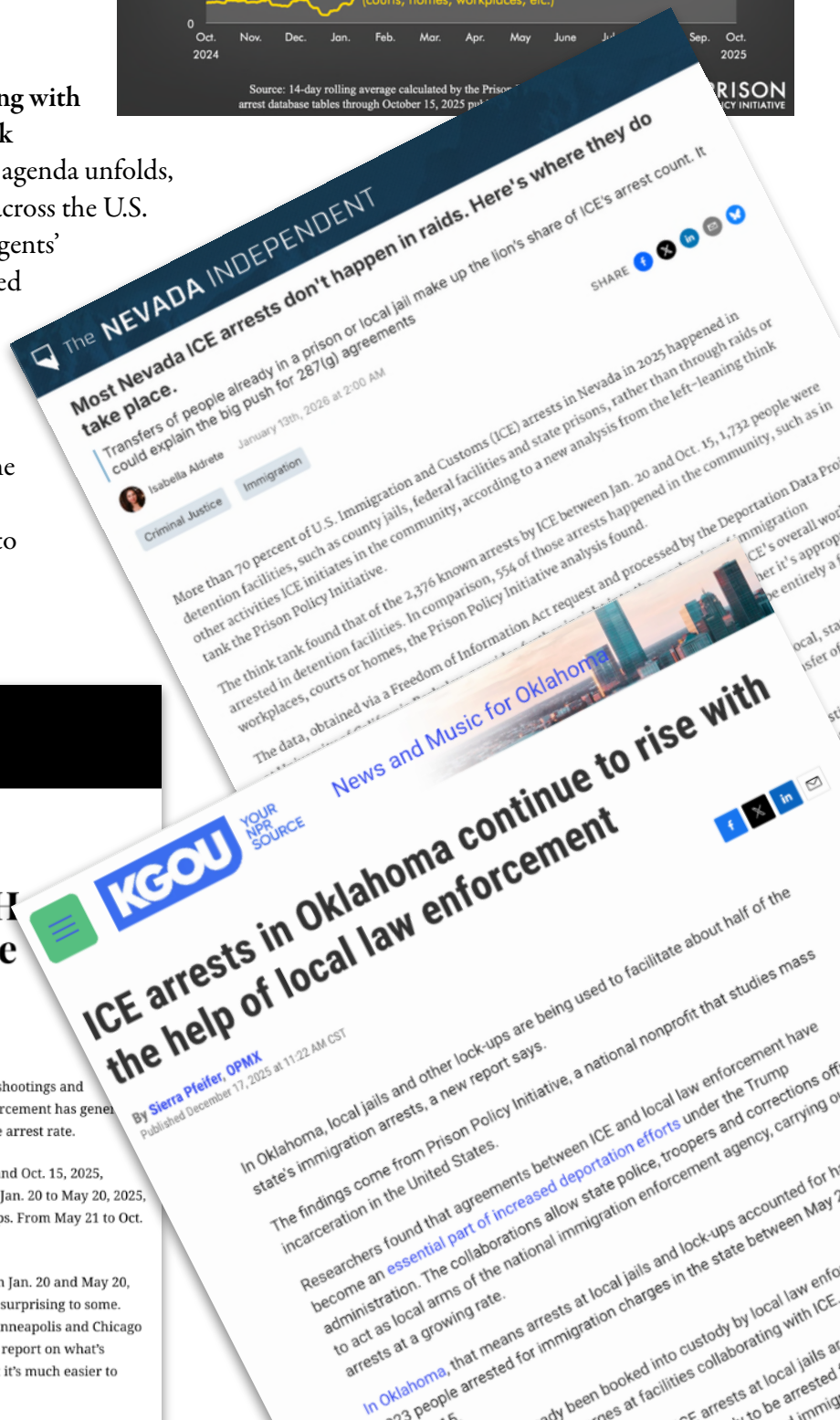
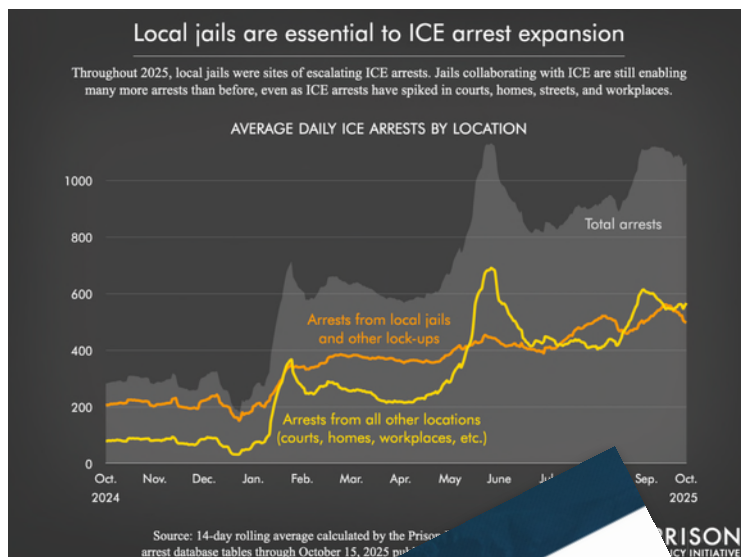
The Prison Policy Initiative, a mass incarceration research nonprofit, [examined](#) detention numbers beyond those of U.S. Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE) and found an increasing share of immigrant detentions involving agencies like its service and local jails.

The number of people detained nationally by ICE was up 45%, according to the group, which says its analysis is a nationwide crackdown on immigration enforcement.

New ICE arrest data show the power of state and local governments to curtail mass deportations. Local jails and police departments are key to the Trump administration's mass deportation agenda because they facilitate ICE arrests of people who are already in police custody. Using fresh data on ICE arrests through mid-October 2025 from the Deportation Data Project, we examine how jails continue to facilitate mass deportation, spotlighting important opportunities for resistance at the state and local levels.

How is your local government collaborating with ICE? Here's how to find out and push back

As the Trump administration's deportation agenda unfolds, federal agents have assaulted communities across the U.S. Most news coverage has focused solely on agents' presence on the ground, but what's less talked about is the key role that local jails and law enforcement have played — even in sanctuary cities. In this piece, we provide comprehensive data showing the local governments collaborating with ICE and the federal government on immigration enforcement, and explain what you can do to push back.



NASHVILLE SCENE

FEATURED

From Traffic Stops to Check-Ins, ICE's Net Is Widening in Tennessee

Attorneys say once-routine immigration cases are now ending in detention

NICK PIPITONE FEB 25, 2026

In Minneapolis, a high-profile ICE enforcement surge drew national scrutiny after multiple fatal shootings and widespread community backlash. But in Tennessee — with the exception of Memphis — ICE enforcement has generally been less visible, focusing instead on jails and detention centers. That, however, hasn't slowed the arrest rate.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested 6,251 people in Tennessee between Jan. 20 and Oct. 15, 2025, according to the Prison Policy Initiative, with the rate of arrests rising throughout the year. From Jan. 20 to May 20, 2025, ICE made 2,509 arrests in Tennessee, about 73 percent of which occurred in jails and other lockups. From May 21 to Oct. 15, there were 3,742 arrests statewide, with 2,754 in detention facilities.

Per capita, Tennessee was among the most aggressive states for ICE arrests in early 2025. Between Jan. 20 and May 20, there were 34.9 arrests per 100,000 residents. Only Texas and Florida ranked higher. This may be surprising to some. Media coverage has generally focused on the most high-profile ICE operations in cities such as Minneapolis and Chicago rather than on the more routine jail-based enforcement happening nationwide. "It's very hard to report on what's happening inside jails," says Wanda Bertram, a spokesperson for the Prison Policy Initiative. "But it's much easier to report on highly visible public arrests."

What Trump gets right and wrong about pardons

Pardons are one of the most important powers presidents have. With a swipe of their pen, they can erase a person's federal criminal conviction, freeing them from prison if they're locked up, and erasing the collateral consequences that often haunt people even after they've served their sentence. But pardons aren't about helping political allies – they're about bringing a measure of justice to an unjust system.

Trump's executive order targeting unhoused people will leave everyone worse off

In July 2025, President Trump signed an executive order aimed at forcibly locking unhoused people experiencing mental health crises or substance use disorder in involuntary commitment in state psychiatric hospitals. As the number of people experiencing homelessness in the U.S. soars and social supports are stripped away, this move will undoubtedly expand the criminal legal system.

Bad Omens: Reform rollbacks in Washington D.C. are a warning sign for state-level advocates

As the Trump administration and conservatives in Congress seek to turn back the clock on decades of successful criminal legal system reform, D.C. provides a window into which parts of the system are likely to be targeted in the future, including in state legislatures where these kinds of policy changes could impact millions of people. In this piece, we examine three efforts to change D.C.'s criminal legal system: threats to bail reform, reinstatement of mandatory minimums, and efforts to treat more youth as adults. We also take a look at similar efforts in various state legislatures to roll back reforms.

truthout

Trump Pardons Anti-Immigration Democratic Rep. Henry Cuellar in Bribery Case

Trump baselessly claimed Joe Biden's DOJ targeted Cuellar, who was indicted last year on bribery charges.

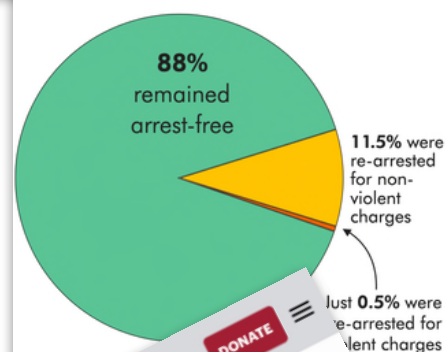
By Chris Walker, TRUTHOUT
December 3, 2025

In a post published to its website on Wednesday, just hours before Trump announced Cuellar's pardon, Prison Policy Initiative digital communications strategist Regan Huston explained that Trump should issue more pardons and commutations — but that, by focusing on his friends and political allies, the president is using the pardon power in a dangerous way.

"While President Trump has used his pardon power far more frequently than most recent presidents, it is still not enough. There are more than 200,000 people in federal custody on any given day," Huston said.

D.C.'s risk-based, no-cash bail system results in low rates of re-arrest

Among people awaiting trial in the community in FY 2025:



Rattling the Bars
@rattlingthebars.bsky.social

+ Follow back

This latest episode of Rattling the Bars is based on a report by @prisonpolicy.org, whose indispensable research provides insight and clarity on how to organize against the prison-industrial complex.

Thanks to Sarah Staudt for authoring it!

www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2026/03...

"D.C. provides a window into which parts of the system are likely to be *targeted by conservative forces* in the future"

Bad Omens: Reform rollbacks in Washington D.C. are a warning sign for state-level advocates
Bills in Congress that repeal bail reform, worsen mandatory minimums, and further criminalize youth threaten to undo decades of criminal legal system reform in D.C.

inewsresource 2025 Pulitzer Prize finalist

Records show San Diego sheriff repeatedly ignored county's restrictions on ICE assistance

by Jake Kinsaid January 23, 2026 Why you can trust inewsresource

Melissa Hernandez said she knew something was wrong when the answers at the jail window started changing.

It was the second week of President Donald Trump's second term — and her nephew, Cosme Kouralou, a Cuban citizen she says had lived in the U.S. for 15 years, was being held at the South Bay Detention Facility on a probation violation after getting out on a felony weapons possession charge.

Hernandez and others went to the downtown San Diego building to bring him home. Staff said he would be released soon, she said. So they waited.

Immigration Customs and Enforcement agency said they were there to pick up Cosme. What are we supposed to do?

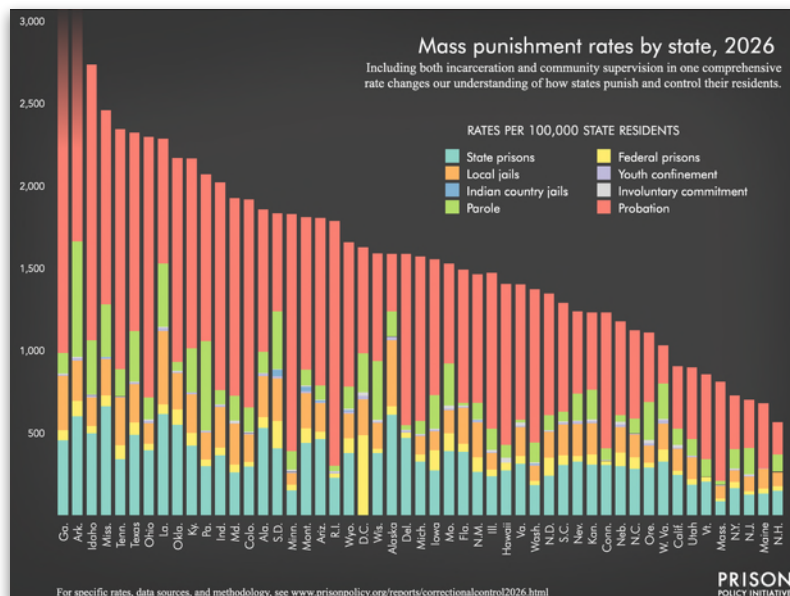
Showing the full reach of the nation's mass punishment system

We use data to illustrate the unprecedented size and reach of the criminal legal system and advocate for policy reforms that prevent system growth and provide meaningful avenues for release.

We publish resources that advocates, lawmakers, and reporters need in order to understand the true size and scale of the mass punishment system and better determine the types of reforms that can begin to shrink its footprint — and those that won't. Highlights of our work include:

Punishment Beyond Prisons 2026: Incarceration and supervision by state

In many states, the number of people on probation or other forms of “community supervision” far outstrips the number of people behind bars. In our updated report, we offer a state-by-state look at the correctional population that goes beyond prison and jail walls — while illuminating how probation and parole supervision often lead to incarceration. This edition of the report also includes an overview of incarceration and supervision populations over time, with a warning that, despite pandemic-fueled downturns, many states are actually at or near peak probation populations.



Klema County Press
SOUTHEAST COLORADO NEWS

Despite prison releases, 'correctional control' keeps grip on millions

By Trimmel Gomes (Alabama News Service) Wed, 04/08/2026 - 05:25

Millions of Americans remain under criminal justice control through probation and parole, according to a [new report](#). It brings into focus legal conditions the authors said often steer the formerly incarcerated back to jail over debt or technical violations, with concerns for Alabama.

The Prison Policy Initiative's latest findings pointed out the "correctional control" population includes 3 million people on probation and more than 536,000 others on parole nationwide.

Wanda Bertram, communication strategist for the initiative, said the systems often act as trapdoors to harsher incarceration.

"In Alabama and in many other states, that means you're going to have to comply with a bunch of rules or else you will be put in jail," Bertram explained. "Alabama actually has the largest number of those rules of any state. There's 22 different conditions that people have to comply with on any given day."

James Byrne
@profbyrne

Prison Policy Initiative report by Leah Wang provides a look at the TOTAL picture of of Correctional Control In the USA : Key finding: overuse of probation and parole often serves as a revolving door back to prison @ICPRWPB @ASC_DCS prisonpolicy.org/reports/correc... via @PrisonPolicy

MASS SUPERVISION
MOST PEOPLE IN THE U.S. JUSTICE SYSTEM AREN'T BEHIND BARS. THEY'RE ON COMMUNITY SUPERVISION.

FINDINGS FROM PRISON POLICY

reform and prisonpolicy

reform 2w
A new study from the Prison Policy Initiative peels back the layers of the supervision system, breaks down the numbers, and examines the impact.

Over the past few decades, community supervision has ballooned, becoming the largest segment of our criminal justice system.

In almost every state, more than half of residents under correctional control are on supervision, while in twenty states more than 2/3rds are on probation or parole. This amounts to millions of people currently living under strict rules, constant monitoring, and the risk of being sent to prison for minor violations.

2.1K 6
Liked by marcmarie114 and 2,103 others
May 21
Add a comment...

Parole in Perspective: A deep dive into discretionary parole systems

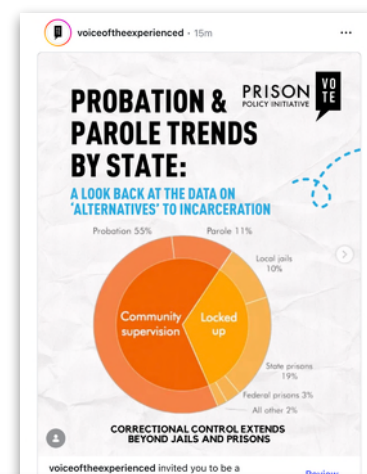
This two-part report provides a comprehensive overview of parole systems in 35 states. It is meant to serve as an essential resource for lawmakers, advocates, journalists, incarcerated people, and others interested in starting a deep dive into their own parole system and identifying impactful reforms. The first part explores the makeup of boards and how they conduct hearings. The second dives into new data on hearings and grants, and the factors that boards consider — including their discretion — in determining whether someone will be released. We also created a guide to help journalists use the report to launch further reporting on parole systems and grant rates.

Probation and parole trends by state: A look back at the data on 'alternatives' to incarceration

Community supervision represents the largest segment of the criminal legal system and, much like incarceration, it is almost entirely a state- and locally-run enterprise. We compiled, corrected, and analyzed 45 years of state-level probation and parole data, and found that while most (but not all) states have reduced the number of people they've placed under supervision, many states have had more people on probation than previously reported.

Since you asked: What does early release look like in states that eliminated discretionary parole?

In response to our two-part deep dive into discretionary parole systems, we received a lot of questions about what is happening in states that have dramatically scaled back parole. While 17 states and D.C. have taken discretionary parole off the table for most or all incarcerated people, they still have other forms of parole and conditional release that could safely release many more people from prison. Here, we examine these slimmed-down parole systems and other release mechanisms, and show they are not wildly different from states still using discretionary parole.



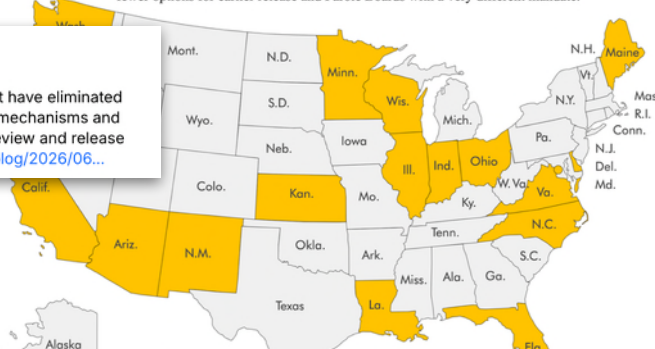
San Quentin News
Study finds static case factors outweigh persons' transformation
February 6, 2026 by [Charles Crowe](#)

PJP PRISON JOURNALISM PROJECT
Parole Has Almost Vanished From South Carolina Prisons
In 2024, the state granted parole at a rate of 4% — the lowest in the country.
by [GARY K. FARLOW](#) March 31, 2026

Alaska Beacon
PART OF STATES NEWSROOM
Lawmakers consider Alaska Board of Parole member amid questions around low rates of parole
Steve Meyer has served on the board since 2016, and is up for appointment for a third five-year term
BY [CORINNE SMITH](#) - APRIL 9, 2026 4:30 PM
The parole board has been the focus of concern from some lawmakers, advocates and members of the public in recent years as parole approval rates have declined significantly. Last year, the board **denied 45%** of applicants. In 2024, it **denied 59%** of applicants, and 58% the year before. In an [analysis](#) from 2019 to 2022, Alaska reduced the number of people granted discretionary parole by 79% — the largest percentage reduction nationwide. Rep. Andi Story, D-Juneau, asked Meyer why there were fewer people parole. "I'm just trying to get a few more down." "There's certainly some validity in that," he said by phone. Higher numbers of people have been able to get parole before the **repeal of Senate Bill 91** ended the practice. Lawmakers increased prison sentences for misdemeanors, and increased penalties for repeat offenders. "There were less grants," Meyer said. "I think that's because of the COVID pandemic. People have been able to do more time during COVID."

The 17 states (plus D.C.) where discretionary parole release isn't a possibility for most people in prison

These states abolished or greatly curtailed the use of discretionary parole, leaving fewer options for earlier release and Parole Boards with a very different mandate.



Fair and Just Prosecution
@fjpporg.bsky.social

New from [@prisonpolicy.org](#): Learn how states that have eliminated discretionary parole continue to use other release mechanisms and where opportunities remain to improve sentence review and release practices. Read the report: www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2026/06...

Prison Policy Initiative and MacArthur Justice Center's National Parole Transformation Project release new guiding principles for parole reform

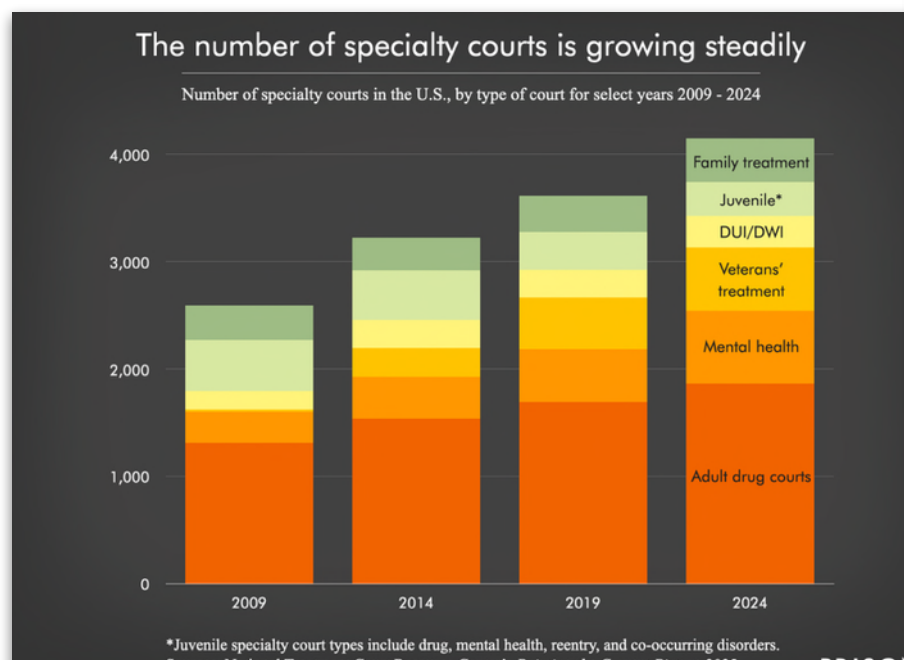
We co-created 16 guiding principles for advocates to consider when pushing for parole reform in their jurisdictions. The principles cover key areas of parole such as access and eligibility, preparation and process, criteria considerations, parole board composition, revocation hearings, and more. Each principle includes an explanation of why these reforms are necessary, as well as concrete examples of common-sense policies that advocates can draw from when working to implement change.

Guaranteed income helps people leaving jail and prison, and that helps everyone

Upon coming home from prison, people face the same — and rising — costs of living as the rest of us. But they have to bear additional costs imposed by the criminal legal system as well, all while navigating additional and unique barriers to employment. Cash assistance (often called “guaranteed income”) makes reentry easier by providing people with a monetary safety net, helping them get jobs, housing, and food, and fulfill any remaining court or parole obligations. In this piece, we explain how guaranteed income reduces recidivism and results in taxpayer savings.

Specialty courts: A disappointing form of diversion

It seems like specialty courts — also called treatment courts, problem-solving courts, or accountability courts — are everywhere, claiming to tackle the root causes of criminalized behavior while reducing the use of jails. But decades of research and advocacy suggest that these courts are no panacea, failing to adhere to best practices or prevent incarceration for many participants.



1,094 followers

National Parole Transformation Project & Prison Policy Initiative

Principles for Parole Reform

After conversations with parole advocates, formerly and currently incarcerated people, people on parole, and families of those behind bars & on parole, NPTP & PPI compiled a series of beliefs that anchor our work to reform and reshape parole systems across the nation.

Informed by experience and guided by experts, our Principles for Parole Reform aim to connect core beliefs to actionable change.

Rebecca & Daniel MacArthur Justice Center

PRISON POLICY INITIATIVE

56 likes

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Our National Parole Transformation Project continues to push for parole reform across the nation.

We encourage organizations that are engaged in state-level parole reform work to sign on to our Principles for Parole Reform.

By signing on, you're showing your organization's support for our vision for parole reform and will incorporate these principles in your work when possible.

Visit the link in our bio for more information.

Living after prison, dangerous emissions, a Rowdie pioneer, don't close the book on Haslam's

By Matthew Peddie, Gracyn Doctor, Quincy Walters, Amelie Horace

Published May 5, 2026 at 1:42 PM EDT

Adjusting to life out of prison can be challenging for people who've just completed their sentence. Could providing them with a basic income help them get back on their feet —and keep them out of jail?

Plus, Temple Terrace's newly discovered breathing risk, the story of a Tampa soccer great and a plan to resurrect Haslam's bookstore.

The cost of mass incarceration

(0:00) New research underscores inequities in the criminal justice system, where the impact of prison extends beyond release. In Gainesville, programs are helping people rebuild. We talk with advocates about reform, economic justice and efforts to break down systemic barriers facing the formerly incarcerated.

GUESTS:

- Wanda Bertram, Prison Policy Initiative communications strategist
- Kevin Scott, Community Spring director of guaranteed income

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.

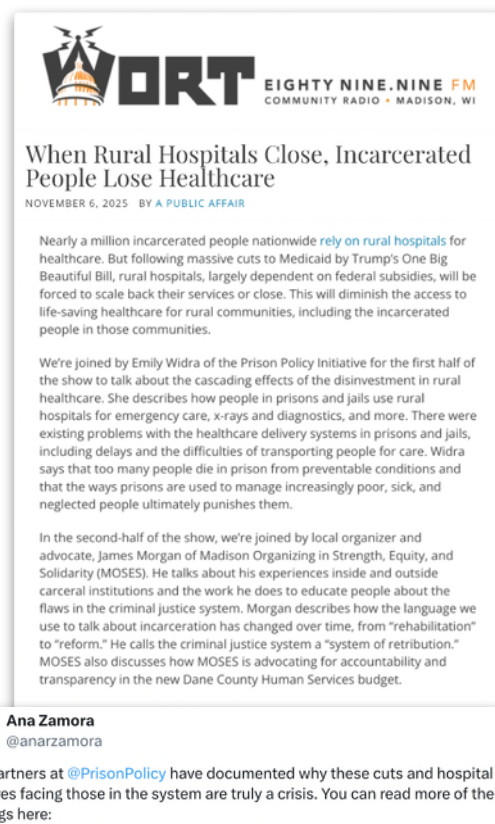
We publish critical resources that advocates, reporters, and impacted communities need to demand that elected officials put public health before punishment. Highlights of our work include:

Almost half of all incarcerated people are in rural jails and prisons and at risk of losing access to hospitals

Nearly a million incarcerated people depend on rural hospitals for routine off-site and emergency medical care. The Trump administration's One Big Beautiful Bill Act will result in the closure of many rural hospitals, leaving people in the surrounding communities — including those in prisons and jails — facing elevated healthcare costs and limited access to necessary healthcare.

Hunger as punishment: How states restrict SNAP benefits for people on probation

Making sure people have food to eat is one of the most important ways to support them when they're on probation. But there is a legislative patchwork across the country that prevents and deters people on probation from receiving vital federal food assistance, known as SNAP benefits. We analyzed laws and applications in all 50 states and found that 39 states have some form of probation violation-related disqualifications for SNAP benefits.



WORT EIGHTY NINE.NINE FM
COMMUNITY RADIO • MADISON, WI

When Rural Hospitals Close, Incarcerated People Lose Healthcare

NOVEMBER 6, 2025 BY A PUBLIC AFFAIR

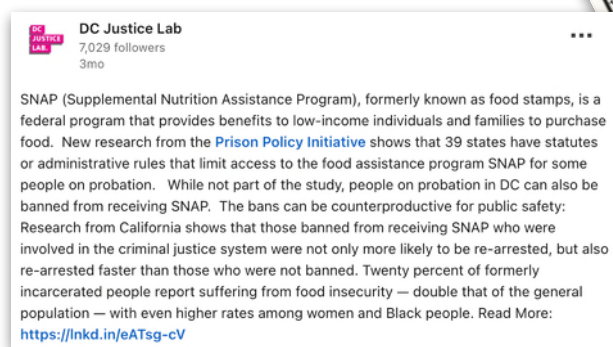
Nearly a million incarcerated people nationwide rely on rural hospitals for healthcare. But following massive cuts to Medicaid by Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill, rural hospitals, largely dependent on federal subsidies, will be forced to scale back their services or close. This will diminish the access to life-saving healthcare for rural communities, including the incarcerated people in those communities.

We're joined by Emily Widra of the Prison Policy Initiative for the first half of the show to talk about the cascading effects of the disinvestment in rural healthcare. She describes how people in prisons and jails use rural hospitals for emergency care, x-rays and diagnostics, and more. There were existing problems with the healthcare delivery systems in prisons and jails, including delays and the difficulties of transporting people for care. Widra says that too many people die in prison from preventable conditions and that the ways prisons are used to manage increasingly poor, sick, and neglected people ultimately punishes them.

In the second-half of the show, we're joined by local organizer and advocate, James Morgan of Madison Organizing in Strength, Equity, and Solidarity (MOSES). He talks about his experiences inside and outside carceral institutions and the work he does to educate people about the flaws in the criminal justice system. Morgan describes how the language we use to talk about incarceration has changed over time, from "rehabilitation" to "reform." He calls the criminal justice system a "system of retribution." MOSES also discusses how MOSES is advocating for accountability and transparency in the new Dane County Human Services budget.

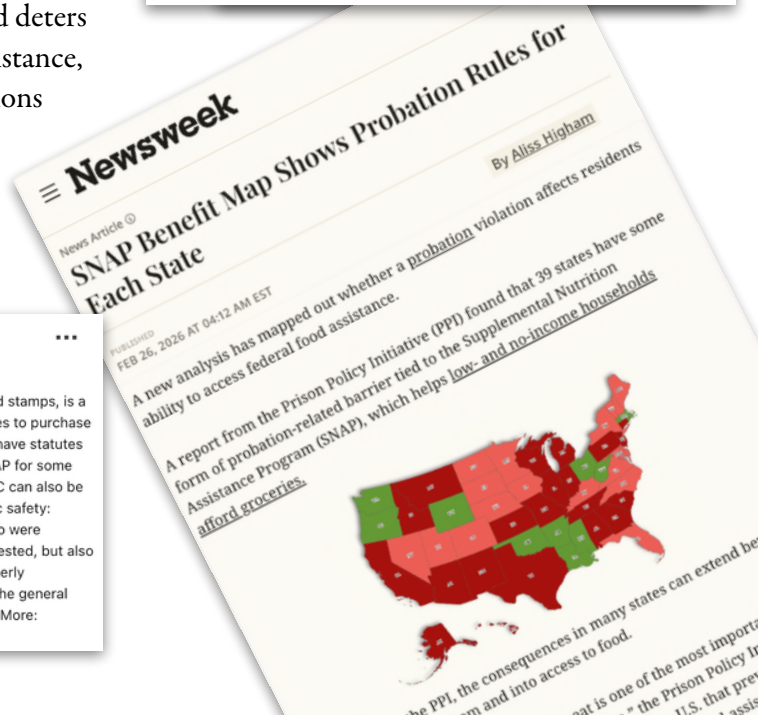
Ana Zamora
@anarzamora

Our partners at @PrisonPolicy have documented why these cuts and hospital closures facing those in the system are truly a crisis. You can read more of their findings here:



DC Justice Lab
7,029 followers
3mo

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), formerly known as food stamps, is a federal program that provides benefits to low-income individuals and families to purchase food. New research from the [Prison Policy Initiative](#) shows that 39 states have statutes or administrative rules that limit access to the food assistance program SNAP for some people on probation. While not part of the study, people on probation in DC can also be banned from receiving SNAP. The bans can be counterproductive for public safety: Research from California shows that those banned from receiving SNAP who were involved in the criminal justice system were not only more likely to be re-arrested, but also re-arrested faster than those who were not banned. Twenty percent of formerly incarcerated people report suffering from food insecurity — double that of the general population — with even higher rates among women and Black people. Read More: <https://lnkd.in/eATsg-cV>

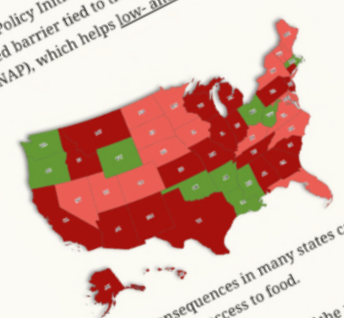


Newsweek
News Article ©
SNAP Benefit Map Shows Probation Rules for Each State
By Alissa Higham

PUBLISHED FEB 26, 2026 AT 04:12 AM EST

A new analysis has mapped out whether a probation violation affects residents' ability to access federal food assistance.

A report from the Prison Policy Initiative (PPI) found that 39 states have some form of probation-related barrier tied to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which helps low- and no-income households afford groceries.



the PPI, the consequences in many states can extend beyond...
that is one of the most important...
the U.S. that prevent...

New research: How past incarceration affects people later in life

Most existing research about the effects of incarceration on health and mortality has focused on the initial weeks, months, and years after people are released from prison, but two recent studies call attention to the health and mortality consequences of incarceration that can take place decades later, when people are 50 or older. The studies authored by Professor Carmen Gutierrez and her colleagues show that prior incarceration is associated with various geriatric health conditions and reduced life expectancy later in life.

Large Minnesota study underscores disproportionate rates of health problems among recently incarcerated and unhoused people

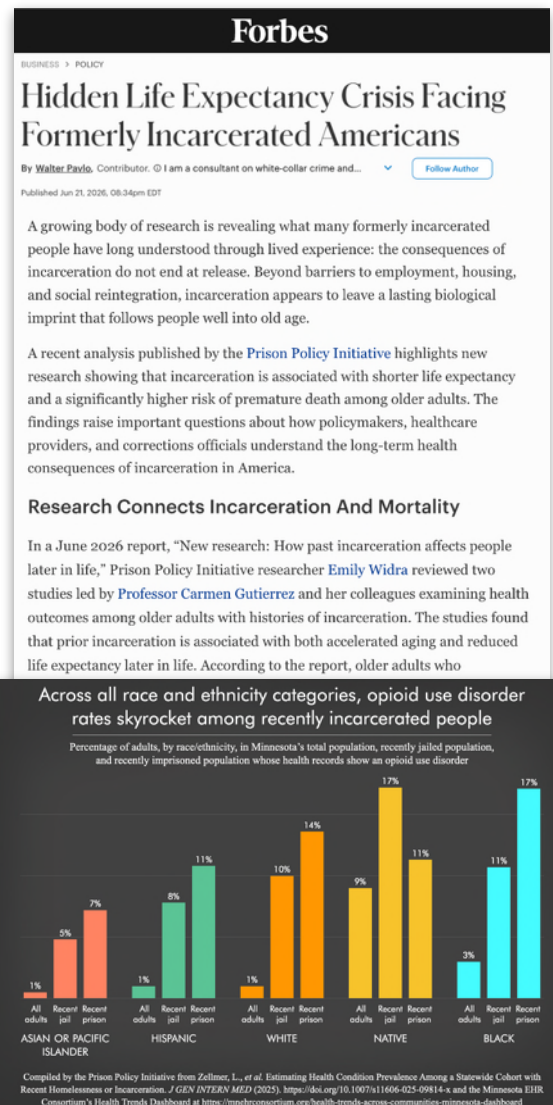
In a study of more than 4.3 million people in Minnesota, researchers at the Minnesota Electronic Health Record Consortium found widespread disparities in health conditions between the general population and people who were recently unhoused, jailed, or imprisoned. They found that recently incarcerated people face higher rates of many health conditions than the statewide population, and unhoused people face the highest rates of nearly every condition included in the study.

New study: Kids who need treatment for opioid use disorder rarely get it

Opioid use disorder among young people is a serious but often overlooked issue in the United States. A new nationwide study published in Health Affairs finds that adolescents aged 12 to 17 struggle to access and remain engaged in treatment, often because they are not offered youth-tailored treatment and gold-standard opioid use disorder medications.

Birth behind bars: Ten years of U.S. jail births covered in the news highlight horrific experiences and minimal data collection

For some of the thousands of pregnant people entering jails each year, at what might be their moment of greatest need — going into labor — jails turn a blind eye, harming mothers, newborns, and their families. The latest project from our partners at Advocacy and Research on Reproductive Wellness of Incarcerated People illuminates these haunting stories and the dire need for data and education about pregnancy in jails.



PRISM Menu

OPINION

What it's like to be pregnant in jail

Behind bars, pregnant women are ignored at best, abused and traumatized at worst

by [Marissa Potts](#)
July 21st, 2025

I was 23 weeks pregnant when I was arrested in December 2021. I was booked in Fort Worth, Texas, on a bond of \$75,000 — a price hard enough to pay as a single woman with no income, and close to impossible for a pregnant single woman with no income.

I was charged for the abuse that my abuser of six years inflicted on my 3-year-old daughter, resulting in her death. I was seen as the mother who had stayed in a toxic

I was no longer a victim of my abuser's violence defendant. My time in jail would include the child I was carrying and a sentence of 15 years, currently serving in a Texas state prison.

...nt women arrested in Texas feel caught in a only interested in locking them up, rather than m with diversion resources that would help

[Karen Thompson](#)
3mo · Edited

Always appreciating the light that [Prison Policy Initiative](#) shines on jail conditions. Pregnant people in prison and jails are often deprived of health care, food, adequate sleeping conditions, and then forced to labor and deliver with no medical attention and no access to pain treatment. For 25 years, [Pregnancy Justice](#) has been in the fight and will continue to fight against these horrors.

Shining a light on the carceral experience

Our research reveals how prisons and jails fall short of their rehabilitative commitments by dampening the benefits of positive reforms and investing in punitive policies that bring misery to incarcerated people and their loved ones.

Our past work on the carceral experience examined the impact of prison transfers on incarcerated people, pregnancy outcomes in prison, and the availability of medication-assisted treatment for people in prison who have an opioid use disorder. This year, we touched on a range of issues, the highlights of which include:

Menstruation as misconduct: How prisons punish people for having their periods

Prisons are primarily designed to confine and control men, which makes managing menstruation extraordinarily difficult, uncomfortable, and often downright dangerous for people inside. Our analysis of prison rules and sanctions across all fifty states and the federal system — as well as accounts of incarcerated people — reveals troubling trends in how the carceral system punishes people for a physiological process they have no control over.

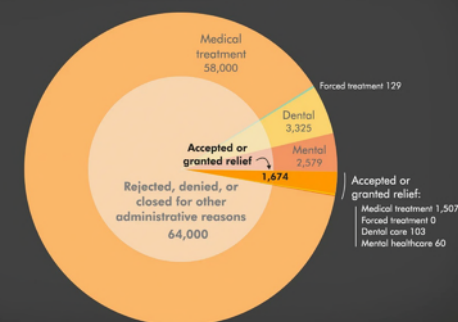


In federal prisons, the grievance system is designed to reject nearly all complaints about medical care

Grievance systems are supposed to provide incarcerated people with a way to challenge issues they face behind bars and (hopefully) receive some kind of relief. In practice, however, incarcerated people who turn to grievance systems are forced to run a gauntlet of rules and regulations just to be heard, and very rarely succeed. In this briefing, we examine the status of nearly 66,000 medical grievances from across the Bureau of Prisons to determine which types of medical complaints are most common in the federal system and how incarcerated people fare in their pursuit of relief.

In federal prisons, less than 1% of medical grievances end in relief

Between 2014 and 2024, a startling 98% of medical grievances in federal prisons were rejected, often for administrative reasons such as using the wrong size sheet of paper or different wordings across forms.



Prison Policy Initiative analysis of data from the Data Liberation Project's "Federal Inmate Complaints" database: www.data-liberation-project.org/datasets/federal-inmate-complaints/

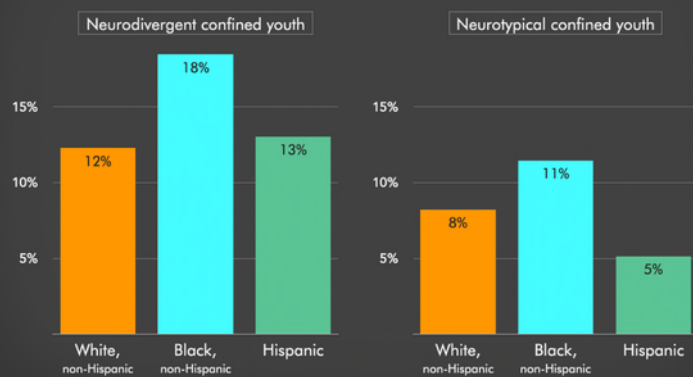
PRISON
POLICY INITIATIVE

New study finds confined neurodivergent youth of color are particularly vulnerable to physical assault by staff

Even though the rate of youth incarceration is more than three times lower than it was twenty years ago, youth of color and youth with disabilities are still overrepresented in custody — and these disparities are getting worse. These children were already among the most vulnerable to involvement in the juvenile legal system, but as the system decarcerates, their vulnerability is compounded by the fact that they are also among the most likely to suffer abuse while confined, including being violently victimized by adults. New research underscores the extent to which staff violence against incarcerated neurodivergent youth of color is substantially worse than it is for white neurotypical youth.

Neurodivergent youth of color are particularly vulnerable to staff assault while incarcerated

Percentage of youth reporting staff physical assault by race/ethnicity and neurodivergence* in the 2018 National Survey of Youth in Custody



* Neurodivergence is defined as youth with a diagnosis of ADD/ADHD, dyslexia, a learning disability, Autism, or Asperger's Syndrome. Sourcing and methodological notes at <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2025/08/19/youth-victimization/>.

PRISON
POLICY INITIATIVE

Forbes

BUSINESS > POLICY

Bureau Of Prisons' Administrative Remedy Process Questioned

By [Walter Pavlo](#), Contributor. © I am a consultant on white-colla...

[Follow Author](#)

Published Apr 21, 2026, 07:25pm EDT

The Admin Process

The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) has long claimed that incarcerated people have a pathway to resolve problems through what is known as the [Administrative Remedy Program](#). The process allows inmates to first address their concerns with their case manager, then the warden, then the regional director then the central office in Washington DC. In theory, this process allows individuals to file complaints, seek relief, and address serious issues such as [inadequate medical care](#). In practice, however, new data shows that this system is far less about resolving problems and far more about shutting them down.

A recent report from the [Prison Policy Initiative](#) takes a close look at how this system functions in the context of medical care. The findings are stark. What is presented as a mechanism for accountability often operates as a barrier to it. For incarcerated people with urgent health needs, the consequences can be profound.



Protecting our democracy from mass incarceration by ending prison gerrymandering

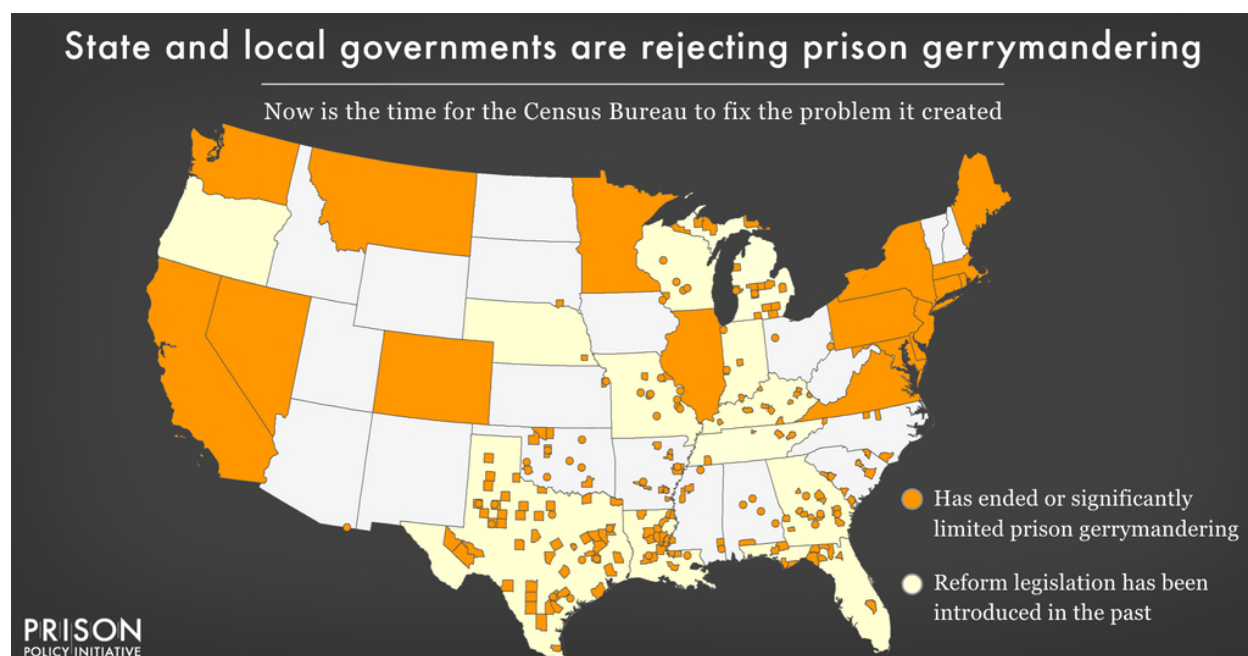
<https://www.prisonersofthecensus.org/>

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. Roughly half the country now lives in a place that has addressed prison gerrymandering, with more than 200 local governments and 19 states tackling the issue. Progress on this issue has been so rapid that the National Conference of State Legislatures called state efforts to end prison gerrymandering “the fastest-growing trend in redistricting.”

New resource: One-page guides to state-level prison gerrymandering

We produced one-pagers highlighting the impact of prison gerrymandering on Black, Native, and Latino residents in the 14 states covered by our Federal Census policy harms democracy state report series (next page).



Federal Census policy harms democracy — but state lawmakers can end this “prison gerrymandering”

Every ten years, when the Census Bureau conducts its official tally of the nation's population, it incorrectly counts incarcerated people as residents of prison cells rather than in their home communities. While the 2030 Census count is still years away, states need to act now to avoid prison gerrymandering the next time they redraw their districts. We released reports focused on Wyoming, Alaska, Oregon, Michigan, Kentucky, Vermont, Texas, Florida, and Georgia that illustrate the problem and provide advocates in these states with useful messaging and data needed to take action.

An end to prison gerrymandering? Not in the 2030 Census

The Census Bureau is heading into 2030 fully set to repeat the mistakes of past Censuses by failing to count incarcerated people correctly. Even though the 2030 Census is still four years away, that's just around the corner when it comes to preparing for the nation's largest peacetime operation. The Bureau's inaction at this point ensures that it will fuel another decade of prison gerrymandering.

WyoFile

FEATURED TOP STORY

Is Wyoming's 'prison gerrymandering' overrepresenting some districts while depriving prisoners of political representation?

Incarcerated people can't vote, but are counted as residents of the legislative district where they're incarcerated, not where they actually call home, a new report finds.



by Andrew Graham July 9, 2025

As convicted felons, the people incarcerated in Wyoming's prisons don't get to vote until they've served their time and gone through a state process to restore their rights.

But even without the right to vote they, too, are constitutionally represented by the senators and representatives who go to Cheyenne each year to craft state laws.

A report published by the Prison Policy Initiative, a nonprofit research group dedicated to reforming the country's prison systems, says Wyoming's inmates aren't being properly counted when legislative maps are drawn and are padding the populations of two statehouse districts in particular.

It's called "prison gerrymandering," Prison Policy Initiative researchers wrote in the report, published today, and the Wyoming districts are among the worst cases in the nation.

VB VermontBiz

Vermont Senate Democrats present Voting Rights Act

Mon, 01/19/2026 - 15:01

Vermont business Magazine On Martin Luther King Day, Democratic leaders and voting rights advocates gathered to announce the Vermont Voting Rights Act, legislation that will safeguard the voting rights of all Vermonters amid growing threats to the federal Voting Rights Act. The Supreme Court plans to rehear *Louisiana v. Callais* prior to the 2026 midterms, which is widely expected to determine the fate of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was instrumental in passing.

The Vermont Voting Rights Act would prohibit racial gerrymandering, expand language assistance and disability access, strengthen voter education, and enhance protections against voter intimidation and misinformation. It would also prohibit discrimination in voting and election procedures based on race, color, or membership in a language minority. The bill will prevent suppression practices that strip the political power of protected communities.

The bill would...

Oregon Capital Chronicle

GOVERNMENT POLITICS

New report slams Oregon for 'prison gerrymandering.' These districts are in the crosshairs

The findings come after a session in which lawmakers failed to pass legislation that would have counted incarcerated individuals based on their prison's location rather than their home address.

Bridge MICHIGAN

Michigan's nonpartisan, nonprofit news source

Critics: 'Prison gerrymandering' gives some Michiganders extra 'political clout'

Florida Phoenix

CIVIL RIGHTS POLITICS & LAW REDISTRICTING

Report says prison gerrymandering gives unfair voting power to four Florida House districts

OCTOBER 16, 2025 11:58 AM

(including Florida) undertake mid-term redistricting for the 2026 election, a government count

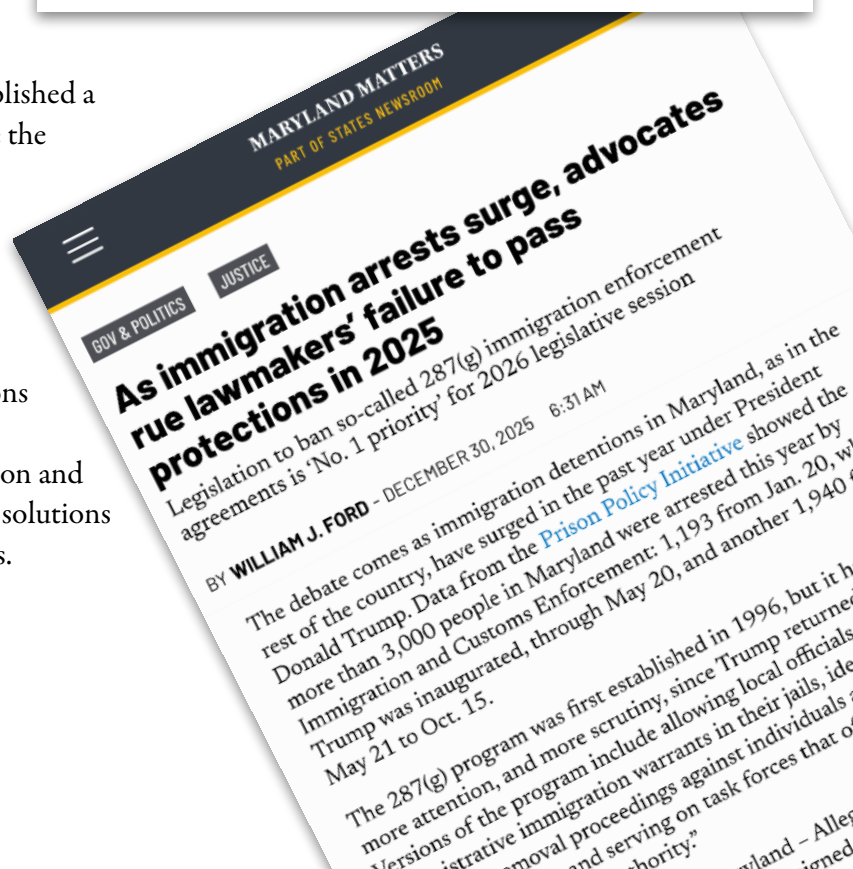
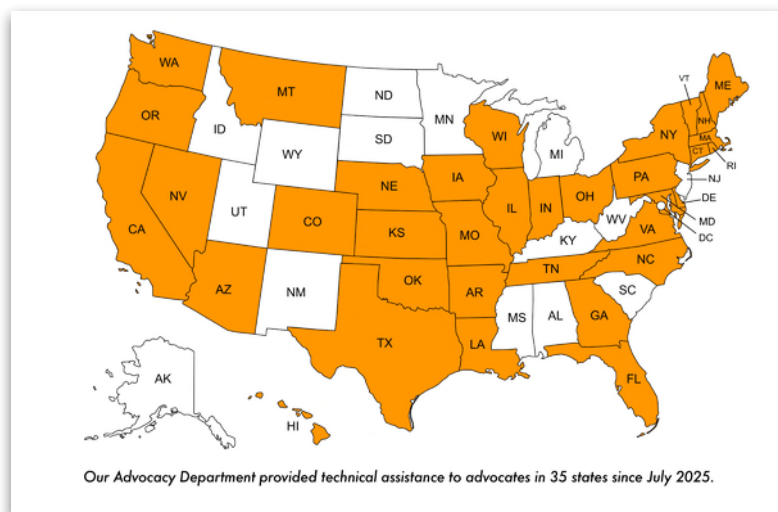
Building a stronger justice reform movement

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

Beyond our publications, we work — often behind the scenes — to provide advocates with research, data, messaging support, and other resources that strengthen the broader criminal justice reform movement.

Over the last year, we worked with advocacy groups in 35 states on issues including fighting jail expansion and promoting parole reform. We prioritize providing support to state and local advocacy groups with limited resources, those in areas without strong organizing networks, and those led by directly impacted people. Examples of this work include:

- In response to our *Hiding in Plain Sight* report, the ACLU of Maryland contacted our staff to request data in support of a measure barring 287(g) agreements and other forms of collaboration between local law enforcement and ICE. We provided the data and testified in the legislature on the measure. In May 2026, the bill became law.
- We supported advocates in Connecticut who were seeking to eliminate language from the states' SNAP application that barred certain people on probation from accessing food benefits. We helped draft the legislation, testified on the measure, and published a report showing how other states could make the same important changes to food benefits.
- We worked with groups in Tennessee, Hawai'i, and Washington who are fighting jail expansion in their states and counties. We provided advocates in those states with detailed analyses of the population projections being used to justify new jail construction, helping them show that reducing incarceration and investing in community services were better solutions to jail overcrowding than building new cages.



Mail scanning isn't the solution to drug use in prisons, here's why

Prisons across the country are stripping away physical mail to combat drug smuggling, severing family bonds in the process. But mail scanning focuses on the wrong part of the problem, failing to prevent overdoses and leaving officials aiming at a constantly shifting target. In this toolkit, we offer an overview of what mail scanning looks like in prisons across the U.S., examine the rationale states often use to justify these policies, and offer strategies for pushing back against mail scanning policies.

Webinar: Fighting for families: How advocates are resisting attacks on visitation and physical mail

Protecting family connections and bonds with loved ones during incarceration is one of the most important and, increasingly, one of the most difficult things advocates can do. Contact visitation is under attack, and more than 30 states no longer allow incarcerated people to receive physical mail from their loved ones. In July, the Prison Policy Initiative and guests Jodi Hocking and Taj Mahon-Haft PhD shared strategies for how to fight back and protect communication between incarcerated people and their loved ones.

Caging Compassion: Recognizing and resisting carceral humanist narratives in criminal justice reform

As the public becomes more aware of the inhumane conditions of incarceration, the call to treat people with dignity grows ever louder. However, many proposed reforms offer the appearance of change, while making little progress towards improving peoples' lives. In this toolkit, we use real world examples to take a closer look at carceral humanism, help readers identify the difference between actual change and reforms that perpetuate injustice, and share useful strategies for those looking to create a system that reinforces humanity rather than making dehumanization more palatable. In February, the Prison Policy Initiative and guests James Kilgore and Mon Mohapatra discussed the new toolkit, offering useful tips for advocates seeking to avoid superficial carceral humanist reforms in their quest to make genuine, lasting systemic change.



Hawai'i Public Radio

Possible new Hawai'i jail spurs discussion on reducing OCCC population

Hawai'i Public Radio | By [Ashley Mizuo](#)
Published July 15, 2025 at 1:24 PM HST

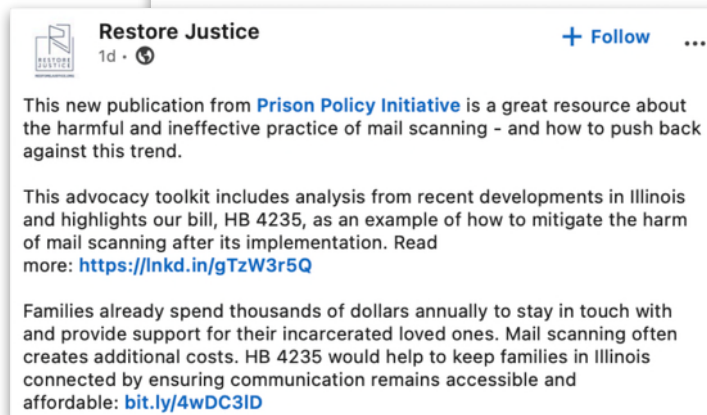
As the state Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation continues to consider how to replace the overcrowded and deteriorated O'ahu Community Correctional Center, the Correctional System Oversight Commission is considering alternatives to a new, bigger jail.

The state budget allocated about [\\$30 million](#) to complete the planning of the new jail, which would cost an estimated \$1 billion and add another 350 beds.

However, Emmett Sanders, policy and advocacy associate for the Prison Policy Initiative, presented options to the commission that would reduce the number of people incarcerated in OCCC.

"One key way that OCCC could reduce its incarcerated population is to address the unusually large number of people that are being held for technical violations of parole," he said.

"The [report](#) mentioned that around 1 in 5 people at OCCC in 2025 were being held on a technical violation. That's a huge percentage, particularly in comparison to some other places that we have examined. The alternative forecast in the report assumes that around 80% of these folks could be diverted out of the jail."

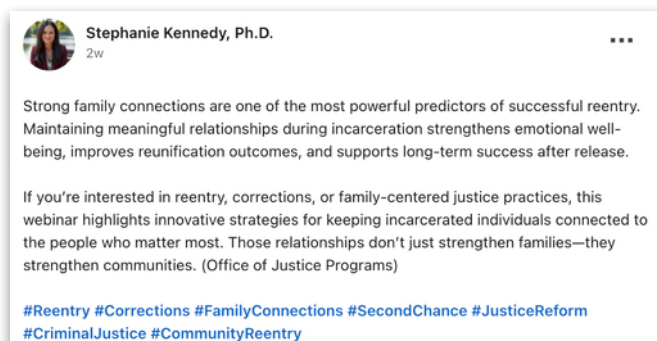


Restore Justice 1d · 🌐

This new publication from [Prison Policy Initiative](#) is a great resource about the harmful and ineffective practice of mail scanning - and how to push back against this trend.

This advocacy toolkit includes analysis from recent developments in Illinois and highlights our bill, HB 4235, as an example of how to mitigate the harm of mail scanning after its implementation. Read more: <https://lnkd.in/gTzW3r5Q>

Families already spend thousands of dollars annually to stay in touch with and provide support for their incarcerated loved ones. Mail scanning often creates additional costs. HB 4235 would help to keep families in Illinois connected by ensuring communication remains accessible and affordable: bit.ly/4wDC3ID



Stephanie Kennedy, Ph.D. 2w

Strong family connections are one of the most powerful predictors of successful reentry. Maintaining meaningful relationships during incarceration strengthens emotional well-being, improves reunification outcomes, and supports long-term success after release.

If you're interested in reentry, corrections, or family-centered justice practices, this webinar highlights innovative strategies for keeping incarcerated individuals connected to the people who matter most. Those relationships don't just strengthen families—they strengthen communities. (Office of Justice Programs)

[#Reentry](#) [#Corrections](#) [#FamilyConnections](#) [#SecondChance](#) [#JusticeReform](#) [#CriminalJustice](#) [#CommunityReentry](#)

Shifting the public discourse on mass incarceration

We equip journalists and creator-journalists with facts, data, and insights to produce impactful coverage to help shift the national dialogue about criminal legal system reform. Our work with the media on both sides of the wall is designed to put pressure on decision makers and build consensus among the broader public that we need to end mass incarceration and criminalization.

This year, we expanded our efforts to get our information and resources into the hands of incarcerated people — the people facing the injustices of the carceral system most severely. We've developed a network of more than 600 incarcerated advocates and journalists who we send regular updates on our work and provide research support for their efforts. Similarly, we launched a new initiative to engage with social media content creators, who increasingly shape the public's view of the carceral system. Highlights include:

Webinar: Taking the Lede: How advocates can shape news coverage of the criminal legal system

With every sheriff's office, department of corrections, district attorney, and police department armed with its own media relations team, the news cycle is all too often stacked toward the status quo when it comes to criminal legal system issues. In response, the Prison Policy Initiative and the Center for Just Journalism hosted a webinar to help advocacy organizations hone their media strategies and get attention on critical issues. Our Communications Strategist Wanda Bertram and Hannah Riley of the Center for Just Journalism provided guidance on how small organizations can make the most of their limited resources and staff capacity.



Pitching is about convincing reporters that a topic you care about is *newsworthy*. But what does that mean?

As the Purdue Writing Lab [explains](#), it is largely about **relevance, timeliness, and simplification**.

The Components of "Newsworthiness"

Why is it that mass media outlets feature particular news stories prominently while others receive little, if any, coverage? Just as individual audience members have access to so much news that they need to decide what kind of information they want to consume (and how they access it), news outlets must decide which events are worth covering and which events are not.

Although every outlet is different, mass media gatekeepers have traditionally relied on some predictable values to evaluate the newsworthiness of a story. Their decisions impact if and how any given story is covered, including how many resources are spent following the story, and how prominently the story is featured. The following is a brief overview of two conceptual news values models that journalists continue to use today to evaluate the newsworthiness of potential stories. Gatlung and Ruge developed the first model in 1973 and Shoemaker et al. followed up with a similar model in 1987.

GATLUNG AND RUGE, 1973

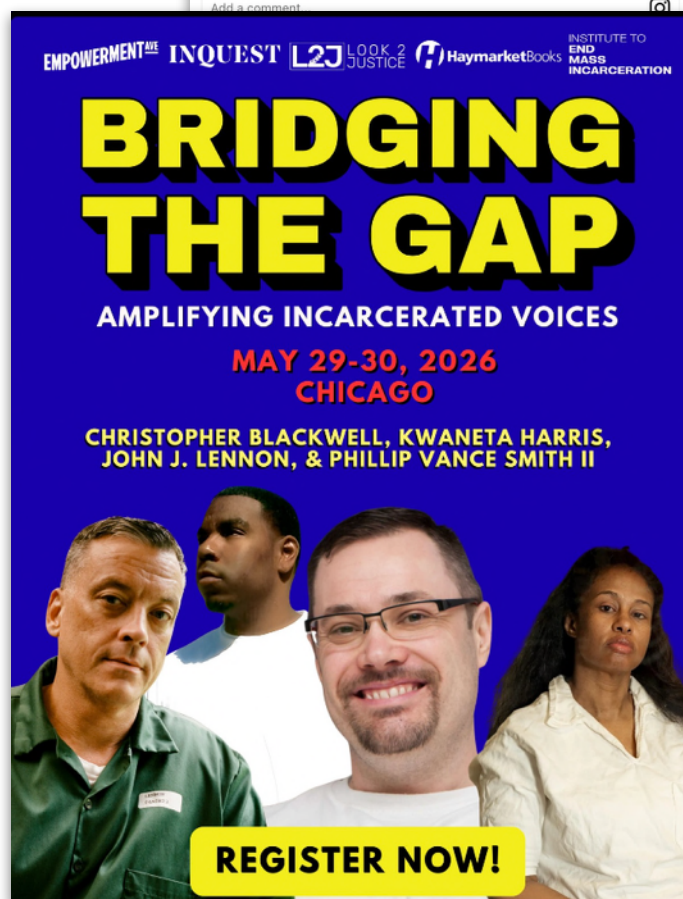
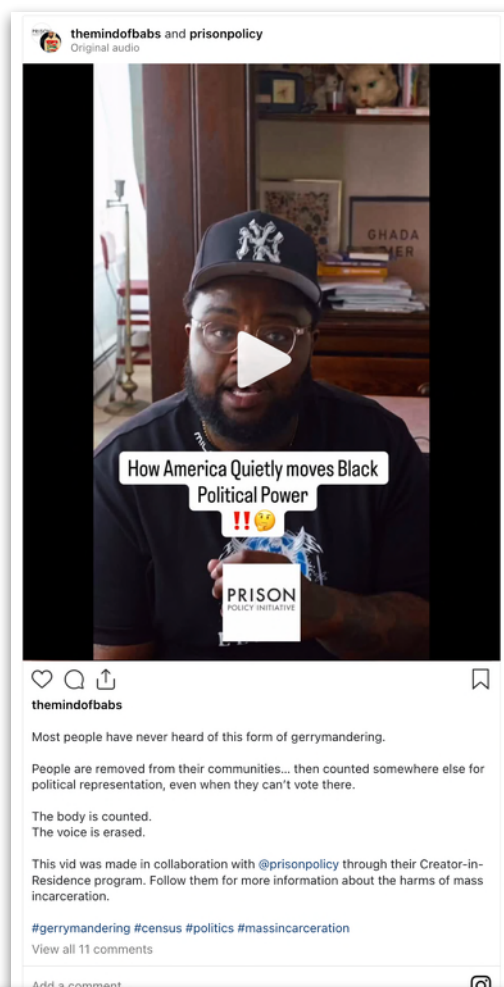
- **Relevance** - How relevant is a news story to the audience in question? For example, a California earthquake is almost always more relevant to a West Coast audience than to an audience in Calcutta.
- **Timeliness** - How recently did the event unfold? Timing is of the utmost importance in today's 24-hour news cycle. Recent events, or events in the making, are most likely to lead the news.
- **Simplification** - Stories that can be easily simplified or summarized are likely to be featured more prominently than stories that are convoluted or difficult to understand.

Creator-in-Residence program launched

The Prison Policy Initiative completed the first iteration of its Creator-in-Residence program. The first resident, Alpha Jalloh, is a formerly incarcerated filmmaker, educator, and storyteller. Over a four month period, Alpha worked with our Communications team to produce a series of videos covering a wide range of issues across the criminal legal system, from the lasting legacy of the failed War on Drugs to the devastating impacts of maternal incarceration. With Alpha's creative expertise and our vast data collection, the series garnered thousands of views, bringing awareness about the harms of mass incarceration to a new audience.

Workshop: What it Looks Like to Collaborate with Incarcerated Writers

In May, our Development & Communications Associate Danielle Squillante co-facilitated a workshop at the "Bridging the Gap" conference with Megan Posco and John J. Lennon on resourcing incarcerated journalists. She provided information to attendees on how to provide data and research support to incarcerated journalists at scale, based on insights from our prison mail program. We currently send our publications inside to over 120 incarcerated journalists in addition to having our work reprinted in prison newspapers and newsletters.



Supporting our work

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

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.

You can make a tax-deductible donation by:

- Scanning the QR code to the right
- Using a debit card, credit card, or Paypal via our website at <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/donate.html>
- Sending a paper check made out to the Prison Policy Initiative to PO Box 127, Northampton, MA 01061
- Setting up payroll deductions for donations to our organization
- Donating stock (the details are available on our donate page)
- Organizing a fundraiser on platforms such as Facebook

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.



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“If you want to begin to **grasp the depth and reach of the carceral reality** in the US — including the growth of immigrant detention — you need to be following (and hopefully donating to) Prison Policy Initiative.”

— Kay Whitlock
Writer and activist

Prison Policy Initiative budget report for 2025-2026 year

Income

Grants & Gifts

Large Foundations	\$575,000
Individual Donors and small foundations	\$896,478

Earned Revenue

Honoraria and consulting fees	\$700
Interest	\$353,807

Total Income	\$1,825,985
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Expenses

Salaries and benefits, including fringe	\$1,964,232
Consultants	\$41,579
Computers	\$2,272
Supplies	\$5,242
Internet hosting, telephone, etc.	\$5,951
Printing and postage	\$9,139
Travel	\$9,040
Other (Accounting, Bank charges, insurance, Dues, Taxes, Advertising, Research tools, FOIA fees, Staff development)	\$25,973

Total Expenses	\$2,063,429
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