



Vision for Justice

2020 and Beyond:

A New Paradigm for Public Safety

Overview • September 2019



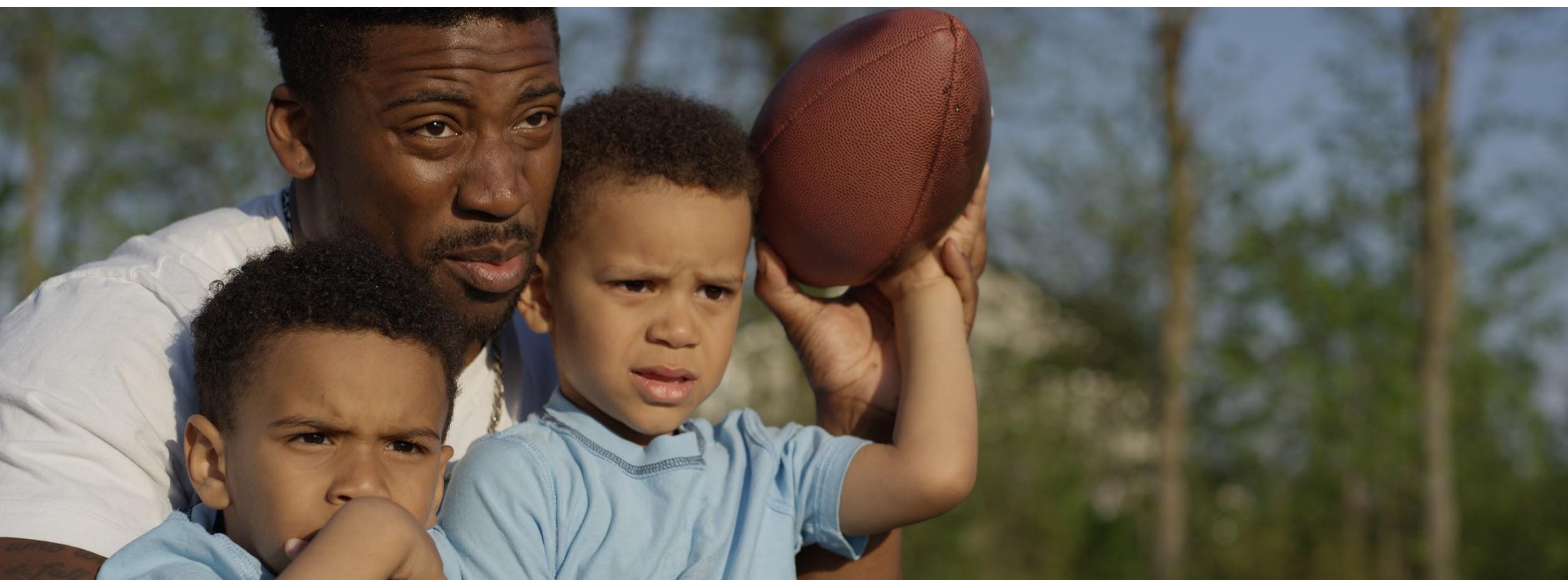
**The American criminal-legal system is a stain
on our democracy.**

This system replicates and reinforces patterns of racial and economic oppression that trace from slavery, including [Black Codes](#), [convict leasing](#), [Jim Crow laws](#), and the [War on Drugs](#). The result is a criminal-legal bureaucracy that denies millions of people the opportunities, legal equality, and human rights that they deserve, even as it fuels the world's highest incarceration rate.

This platform envisions a new paradigm for public safety that respects the humanity, dignity, and human rights of all people. We propose a holistic framework that expands our view of public safety and prioritizes upfront investments in noncarceral programs and social services, including additional resources for education, housing, employment, health care, social-emotional supports, and other public benefits. We believe that this paradigm not only furthers equity, but also constitutes effective policy: When we stop using criminal “justice” policy as social policy, we make our communities [safer, more prosperous](#), and better at ensuring opportunity.

This platform offers concrete solutions spanning every stage of the criminal-legal process, yielding a comprehensive framework for transformation. We believe that this comprehensive approach is necessary: Transforming the American criminal-legal system requires dramatic decarceration and a cohesive pathway to do so, not piecemeal reforms that tinker around the margins. We created *Vision for Justice: 2020 and Beyond* to offer exactly this prescription.

Even with this comprehensive and unified approach, *Vision for Justice: 2020 and Beyond* is only a starting point. The United States leads the world in imprisoning or supervising [more than 6.6 million people](#) while ripping moms, dads, and loved ones from their families every day. This bureaucracy will not vanish overnight. Even if we reduced our incarcerated population by 80 percent, we would barely reach the U.S. incarceration rate from 40 years ago. A new paradigm for public safety requires not only the solutions enumerated here, but also an ongoing commitment to further reforms.



Our platform presents 14 planks across three themes. Before discussing these planks, though, we first offer a set of core principles that must undergird any change pursued.

- All reforms must produce decarceral results and work to end racial and economic inequity.
- All reforms, as they shrink the criminal-legal system, must invest resources in those communities that have been most harmed by mass incarceration and mass criminalization.
- All reforms must be rooted in human rights, restorative justice practices, and evidence-based strategies to improve the health, welfare, and safety of communities.
- All reforms must involve a participatory decision-making process that empowers community members to provide greater oversight, accountability, and influence over public safety priorities and activities.
- All reforms must be holistic: A truly meaningful overhaul requires that all planks be implemented together. This platform is a unified prescription, not a menu of options.
- All reforms must be intersectional. Although this platform highlights the experiences of Black and Brown communities, we recognize that within these communities lies great diversity that compounds disparities within the criminal-legal system, including diversity based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status, disability, HIV status, economic status, and involvement in underground economies. Our goal is to build a system that respects the dignity, rights, and humanity of all people.

I.

Ensure Equity and Accountability in the Criminal-Legal System

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#1**

**Create a new paradigm for
public safety and policing.**

**PLANK
#2**

**Create a new framework for
pretrial justice.**

**PLANK
#3**

**Ensure an effective right to
counsel.**

**PLANK
#4**

Decriminalize poverty.

**PLANK
#5**

**Ensure accountability and
transparency in prosecution.**

II.

Build a Restorative System of Justice

**PLANK
#6**

End jails and prisons as we know them in America.

**PLANK
#7**

Deprivatize justice.

**PLANK
#8**

Dramatically reform sentencing policy.

**PLANK
#9**

Support the children of incarcerated parents.

**PLANK
#10**

Ease legal challenges to address racial inequity and abolish slavery in prisons.

III.

Rebuild Communities

**PLANK
#11** **Rebalance spending priorities
by investing in communities.**

**PLANK
#12** **Reimagine reentry,
probation, and parole.**

**PLANK
#13** **Build a school-to-opportunity
pipeline.**

**PLANK
#14** **End the War on Drugs.**

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) is a member in good standing of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and represents public safety officers and other public service workers. While AFSCME agrees with many aspects of this platform, it does not support several recommendations outlined in the document. A longer statement presenting the view of AFSCME's frontline members can be found [here](#).



I.

Ensure Equity and Accountability in the Criminal-Legal System

PLANK #1:

Create a new paradigm for public safety and policing.

Our current criminal-legal system and policing practices rely on a criminalization model that reproduces racial inequity while widening the divide between police and the communities that they are supposed to serve. A new paradigm for public safety emphasizes noncarceral interventions and programs, not jails and prisons, to keep communities safe.

- Dismantle and reverse all harmful policies in the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (the “1994 Crime Bill”) and pass a modern 21st century public safety bill. (See *Plank #11: Rebalance spending priorities by investing in communities.*)
- Establish a federal use-of-force standard that emphasizes de-escalation and permits the use of force only when necessary.
- End local police and law enforcement officers’ [civil immigration enforcement cooperation](#) under 287(g) agreements.

- Amend [Section 242 of Title 18](#) to provide a lower *mens rea* standard (i.e., [recklessness](#)) to ensure accountability for civil rights violations that result from police misconduct.
- Prohibit profiling based on actual or perceived personal characteristics, including race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, proficiency with the English language, immigration status, and housing status, by rigorously implementing comprehensive anti-profiling policies, creating interventions, and enacting legislation such as the End Racial and Religious Profiling Act.
- Deprioritize spending on punitive, arrest-focused policing and shift public resources toward upfront, noncarceral investments that enable communities to be safe and thrive. At the federal level, rebalance social policy-oriented funding programs and criminal-legal funding programs, including [Byrne-JAG](#), and redesign all performance metrics so that they prioritize noncarceral, social policy-oriented interventions.
- Expand investments that build social capital and proactively keep communities safe, such as restorative justice, neighborhood mediation, peace-keeping programs, community-based gang intervention, and [“violence interruption”](#) programs, while creating community-based services to prevent and respond to crises relating to mental health, substance use, and other factors.
- End federal programs that provide military equipment (e.g., the [U.S. Department of Defense 1033 program](#)) and redirect resources away from surveillance and/or criminalization of marginalized communities.
- Enforce the Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2013.
- End qualified immunity for police officers, a doctrine that prevents them from being held legally accountable when they break the law.

- Prohibit the use of predictive policing and facial recognition technologies by law enforcement.
- Mandate data collection and reporting of all enforcement-focused police-community interactions, including data about officer-involved shootings, use-of-force incidents, stops, searches, and arrests, and mandate officer training on de-escalation, crisis intervention, adolescent development, and proper interactions with people with mental and physical disabilities. Ensure that all data collection is disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, disability, and other demographic characteristics and made publicly available.
- End the police gathering of military intelligence, which has particularly impacted Arab American and American Muslim communities, including police participation in Suspicious Activity Reports, state-level fusion centers connecting local and federal agencies for information sharing, and Joint Terrorism Task Forces comprising members of local police departments, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- End civil asset forfeiture.
- Support initiatives that provide training and transitional job opportunities for those who are impacted by policy changes.
- Rescind the U.S. Department of Justice's 2018 [memorandum](#) that guts the DOJ's Civil Rights Division's use of consent decrees.



PLANK #2:

Create a new framework for pretrial justice.

Every night, [nearly half a million people](#) sit in jail *not* because they have been convicted of a crime, but because they are detained pretrial — often because they cannot afford [money bail](#). They are deprived of seeing their family members and loved ones, living in their homes, and even holding down jobs. A new framework for pretrial justice maximizes pretrial liberty while ending racial and wealth-based discrimination.

- Reduce local jail populations and ensure that at least 95 percent of individuals are released before trial.
- Reform the federal system so that it eliminates [existing “presumptions” of pretrial detention](#) — e.g., the “previous violator presumption” and the “drug and firearm offender presumption” — and conforms, as closely as possible, to the *State Policy Priorities* in the [full platform](#) (For more detail, see the *State Policy Priorities* in *Plank #2: Create a new framework for pretrial justice*). This includes substantially shrinking the eligibility net for pretrial detention so that it only includes the most serious offenses.
- Eliminate the use of money bail, pretrial fees, and other “secured” financial conditions that require upfront payments and/or proof of collateral.
- Automatically release everyone charged with a misdemeanor and/or certain felonies using a “cite and release” program. Offer pretrial supports — such as court reminders, redesigned summons forms, childcare, housing, and transportation assistance — that help people return to court.

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- Severely limit eligibility for pretrial detention and provide a robust, adversarial process before anyone can receive supervision conditions or detention. To facilitate this process, substantially increase funding for indigent defense. Ensure the presumption of innocence and, accordingly, release throughout the pretrial process.
- Set clear targets for reducing federal pretrial detention. Before the Bail Reform Act of 1984, the federal [pretrial detention rate was 24 percent](#); now, [it is almost 75 percent](#). Policymakers should set clear metrics for reversing this increase and at a minimum, returning to a rate that is consistent with pre-Bail Reform Act levels.
- Require reporting of all prosecutorial decision-making (*i.e.*, charging decisions and other discretionary decisions).
- Require robust, timely collection and reporting of pretrial detention and release data so communities can monitor whether racial and/or other disparities persist. Data must be automatically collected before trial for each individual detained and must include information about race and ethnicity, age, and gender.
- Resist the use of algorithm-based “risk assessment” tools, which exacerbate racial biases surrounding the conditions of release and detention decisions.
- Incentivize states to reform their pretrial systems so that they conform to the *State Policy Priorities*. (For more detail, see the *State Policy Priorities* in *Plank #2: Create a new framework for pretrial justice* of the [full platform](#)).
- Ensure that people accused of probation and parole violations receive the same rigorous processes accorded to those who are initially arrested for a crime. (See *Plank #12: Reimagine reentry, probation, and parole* for more guidelines surrounding probation and parole.)



PLANK #3:

Ensure an effective right to counsel.

[More than 80 percent](#) of people charged with felonies cannot afford a private lawyer and often must rely on under-resourced public defenders, contract attorneys, or court-appointed counsel. States must fulfill their Sixth Amendment obligations and build a well-financed, state-administered system of indigent defense.

- Build statewide “right to counsel” services with sufficient funding to ensure that public defenders have manageable caseloads and resources not only for investigators, experts, and language access services, but also for [early pretrial representation](#) and “holistic defense” practices. At the federal level, support these efforts by substantially increasing state grants.
- Ensure funding and salary parity between public defenders and prosecutors.
- Authorize the Department of Justice to sue jurisdictions that do not meet their Sixth Amendment obligations, such as by violating caseload limits or attorney independence, and require that states certify compliance with the Sixth Amendment to receive federal grants.
- Abolish fees for public defenders and create fair, transparent frameworks for determining indigence.
- Provide significant grants to states, provided that they conform their public defense systems to meet core principles set forth in the *State Policy Priorities* in the [full platform](#). Place data collection contingencies on states receiving funding to incentivize robust data collection and reporting; in addition, require states to produce data that are disaggregated by people’s demographics and that specify how much time was dedicated to each person’s case. The funding should provide resources for building a robust, independent, and statewide “right to counsel” system.
- Create a federal Center for Defense Services that provides technical assistance, support, and oversight for state public defense services.

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PLANK #4

Decriminalize poverty.

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The United States currently fills its jails and prisons with indigent individuals, turning jail cells into debtors' prisons. States must *stop* criminalizing poverty and *start* building systems that use treatment and social services to address social problems.

- Abolish fees from the criminal-legal process and calibrate fines so they reflect people's ability to pay.
- Reinstate the Department of Justice's 2016 [guidance](#) on enforcement of fines and fees.
- Offer noncarceral responses to behaviors caused by poverty, mental health, or substance use.
- Immediately end counterproductive punishments for debt nonpayment, such as suspending people's driving privileges or voting rights.
- At the federal level, remove the federal mandate that suspends driver's licenses for failure to pay child support. In addition, condition federal grants on certification that states do not suspend driver's or other professional licenses, jail people, extend probation terms, or [restrict voting](#) based on unpaid debts.



- Expressly prohibit states from incarcerating people for nonpayment of child support and provide greater support for noncustodial parent employment programs.
- At the state level, create a county-based grant program that requires applicant jurisdictions to survey their jail populations, evaluate the root causes of individuals' criminal-legal involvement, and propose action plans that offer upfront, noncarceral programs and services (e.g., transitional housing, expanded access to behavioral health services) that address the major needs identified. Financial incentives should be provided to jurisdictions that dramatically reduce criminal-legal involvement. At the federal level, provide a grant through the Department of Health and Human Services that is similarly structured to facilitate "root cause analysis" and provide resources for addressing needs and achieving decarceration.
- Poverty, mental health, disability, substance use, and homelessness must not be criminalized. Jurisdictions should offer noncarceral interventions (*i.e.*, free, need-based and trauma-informed social services and supports) as early as possible in the criminal-legal process, including upfront treatment, [non-police options](#) for addressing mental health-related crises, and universal screenings (e.g., for mental illness or substance use) before jail booking takes place.
- Significantly expand grant programs that increase access to behavioral health, substance use, homelessness prevention, and related services that help prevent unnecessary criminal-legal involvement. Such grants may be used to, among other things, fund housing programs and implement [sequential intercept models](#) that prioritize interventions before criminal-legal involvement occurs.

PLANK #5:

Ensure accountability and transparency in prosecution.

Our laws and policies have not provided sufficient transparency, standardization, or accountability over prosecutorial decisions and prosecutorial misconduct. This hurts not only the people affected, but also their families and communities. We must create a system that is fair, transparent, and accountable.

- Mandate “open file” discovery and ensure that it occurs before a plea agreement takes place. As part of this reform, create robust systems for disclosing police and prosecutor misconduct and introduce new requirements to ensure the quality of, retention of, and access to evidence.
- Appoint judges with a wide variety of backgrounds, including histories as civil rights and defense attorneys.
- Establish an independent, publicly accountable statewide agency — with robust, meaningful mechanisms of community oversight — that is tasked with investigating prosecutorial misconduct and prosecutorial over-charging. At the federal level, increase Department of Justice investigations into prosecutor and police misconduct.
- Transfer the Department of Justice’s responsibility for clemency to independent experts.
- End “absolute immunity” for prosecutors.
- Enact legislation requiring that the Justice Department’s Office of Professional Responsibility, which oversees department lawyers, answer to the Office of the Inspector General rather than the Office of the Attorney General. Require the inspector general to investigate and act on any credible allegation of prosecutorial misconduct. Further, require annual reporting of all findings to the U.S. Congress.
- Give the Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division explicit authority to investigate local and state prosecutors’ offices for systemic violations of federal and constitutional law.
- Amend 34 U.S.C. 12601 from “juvenile justice” to “juvenile and criminal justice.”



II.

Build a Restorative System of Justice

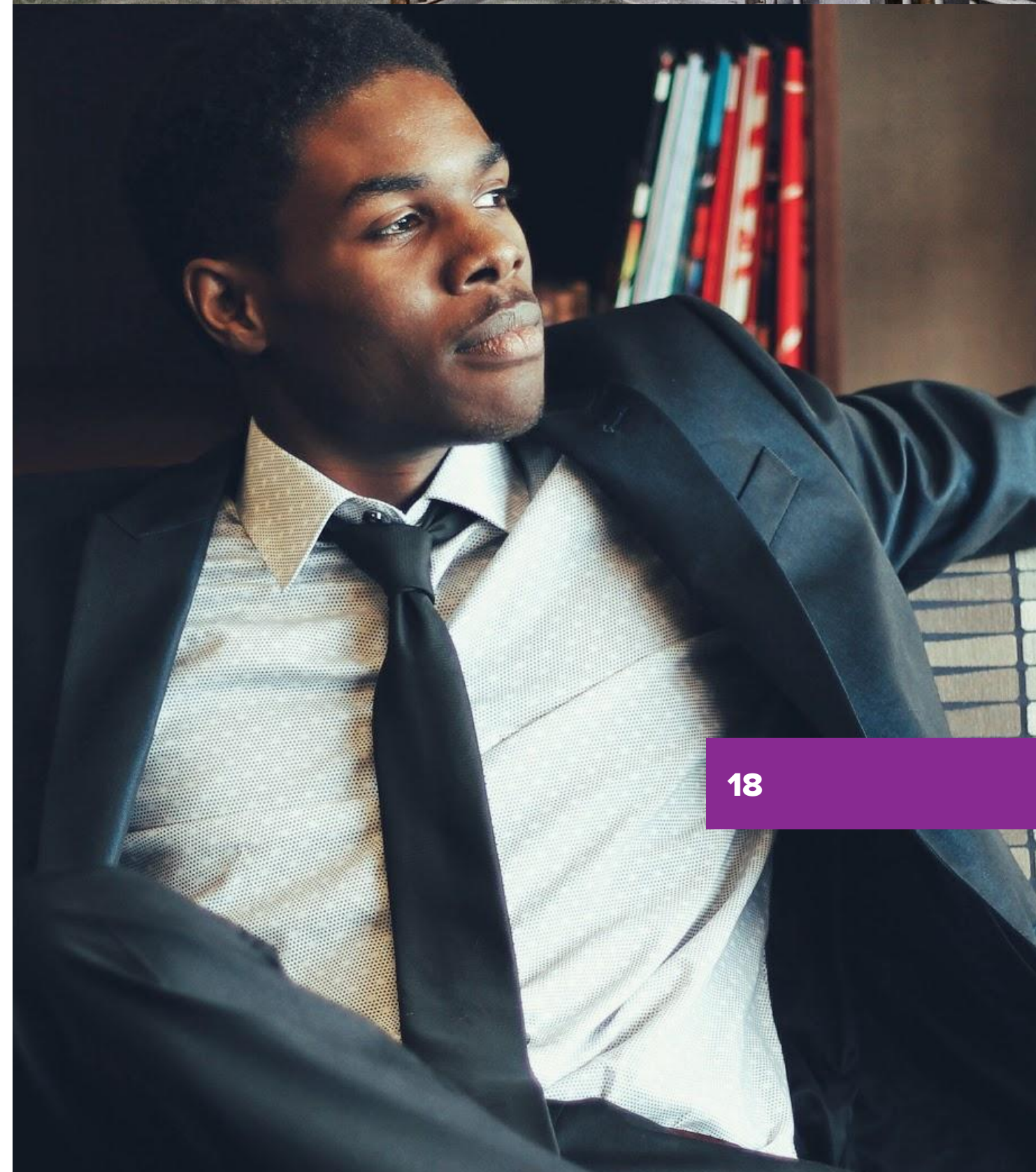
PLANK #6:

End jails and prisons as we know them in America.

Rather than focus on rehabilitation, jails and prisons [in the United States today](#) are often inhumane institutions that make our communities *less* safe. A new system must provide justice and accountability while dramatically decarcerating our communities, promoting rehabilitation, supporting families, respecting human rights, and building opportunity.

- Provide financial incentives for closing jails and prisons after reforms have shrunk the number of people in the system, including requirements that the resources saved go to noncarceral social services and infrastructure investments identified by communities.
- Dramatically expand alternatives to incarceration, including a requirement that, before imposing a custodial sentence, judges find by clear and convincing evidence that no noncustodial sentencing options would be sufficient.
- Introduce and enact legislation like an Incarcerated Person's Bill of Rights, which would ensure that incarcerated people get the education, training, and treatment they need for successful reentry and are able to maintain family relationships. At the federal level, include funding support such as Perkins, Pell, Free Application for Federal Student Aid, and other grants, loans, and aid for career and technical education; in doing so, ensure that no benefits go to for-profit institutions.
- Require that all federal agencies confining people, either directly or through a contract or intergovernmental agreement, adopt, abide by, and go beyond the [Nelson Mandela Rules](#), which lay out a minimum standard of how incarcerated individuals should be treated. Ensure that all facilities confining people operate in a safe and humane manner that promotes rehabilitation.

- Require all facilities to follow structural guidelines using treatment-focused models found in other [nations](#). Such guidelines should be created pursuant to a task force comprising not only researchers and system actors, but also individuals who have been incarcerated, their families and loved ones, public defenders, and community advocates.
- Support initiatives that provide training and transitional job opportunities for those who are impacted by policy changes.
- Ensure that all basic necessities, including hygiene products, are provided free of charge. (See *Plank #4: Decriminalize poverty* for more details about fee abolition.)
- Pass legislation that would allow incarcerated individuals to access Medicaid while they are confined; repeal the [current exclusion in the Social Security Act](#); and otherwise ensure seamless integration with post-release health care so that no individual is ever without health coverage.
- End solitary confinement. Ensure that alternative therapeutic and rehabilitative mechanisms are available to effectively ensure the safety of individuals in prison and staff.



PLANK #7

Deprivatize justice.

Few functions in the criminal-legal system have *not*, in some way or in some jurisdiction, been commercialized by private industry. Worse, the costs resulting from these exploitative practices are carried by our society's most vulnerable people. We must significantly minimize the involvement of private companies, including prohibiting private prisons, and end profit-making from punishment. No one should profit from surveilling or incarcerating people.

- End all contracts with private prisons, jails, detention centers (including those housing immigrants and children), and probation companies in both the federal and state criminal-legal systems. Review all contracts with private food, commissary, telecom, medical, and other service providers, rebidding all contracts originating more than three years ago after first exhausting all public and nonprofit options. All contracts granted to private vendors should prioritize quality, and the number of litigation challenges brought against vendors should be weighed heavily.
- Prohibit all so-called “offender-funded” contracts and fund all ancillary prison and jail services using government funding. The federal, state, and local governments should fund the full cost of their criminal-legal systems, including electronic monitoring and services often outsourced to private companies, such as commissary hygiene products, phone and video calls, and food in prison visiting rooms. Families and support systems for the individuals who are being processed through the criminal-legal system should not bear the burden of paying these fees.
- Clarify that consumer protection laws cover all privately provided services within the criminal-legal system.
- End commissary mark-ups.
- Prohibit commission payments in all forms; ensure that this prohibition applies to all federal agencies, state agencies, and local jurisdictions that contract with private entities.
- Require all state agencies to negotiate contracts based on delivering the *best value* to consumers, including currently incarcerated people, and providing services in a manner that furthers the public interest.

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PLANK #8

Dramatically reform sentencing policy.

Our soaring level of incarceration is caused, in no small part, by extremely harsh sentencing policies. The United States uses criminalization as the default solution to social problems. And, when we sentence people, we make their sentences disproportionately long — much longer than in comparable nations. A rethinking of what we classify as — and how we punish — crimes is necessary.

- Review all felonies and misdemeanors to determine if they can be decriminalized or reclassified downward. Reduce sentence length, aligning U.S. sentences with peer nations worldwide. Ensure that sentence reductions are accompanied by investments that use noncarceral, prevention- and treatment-focused initiatives that promote public safety by addressing poverty, addiction, mental health, and other root issues that drive criminal-legal involvement.
- Dismantle and reverse all harmful policies contained in the 1994 Crime Bill and pass a modern 21st century public safety bill.
- Abolish mandatory minimum sentencing laws and the death penalty.
- Create a maximum sentence of no more than 20 years in prison, with extremely rare exceptions and a rigorous process for the application of those exceptions.
- End life without parole sentences, including juvenile life without parole and de facto life sentences.
- Make all sentencing changes retroactive so that they apply to currently incarcerated individuals. To facilitate this process, create an office that reviews federal case law and sentencing guideline changes, ensuring that all beneficial changes and case law are applied to currently incarcerated prisoners.

- Require a “second look” process to systematically review long sentences.
- Reform conspiracy laws, including those relating to drug conspiracies, to reduce individuals’ liability for the conduct of others. Require specific intent to be held liable as a co-conspirator, raise the bar for the type of evidence necessary to establish conspiracy, and limit liability for conduct that co-conspirators do not commit.
- Restrict the use of algorithm-based “risk assessment” tools, which exacerbate racial biases in sentencing determinations.
- Eliminate the [“valid court order” exception](#) in the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, which allows judges and other court personnel to detain youth adjudicated as status offenders.
- Fund state-based pilot programs to develop and implement rehabilitative, non-institutional alternatives to incarceration, including models based on restorative justice and free, need-based treatment and social services.
- Require racial impact statements for sentencing and other prison-related bills.
- Mandate racial equity in sentencing practices through periodic audits to identify sentencing disparities based on race. Provide meaningful opportunities for people to reduce their sentences due to those disparities.
- End the indefinite detention of American Muslims and put an end to Communications Management Units.
- Reinstate the Department of Justice’s 2013 Smart on Crime [guidance](#) to federal prosecutors.





1 in 28

children has an
incarcerated parent.

20%

or more of these kids
are under the age of four.

5 mil.

or more have had an
incarcerated parent
in the past.

1 in 5

adults has
a parent who has
been incarcerated.

PLANK #9

Support the children of incarcerated parents.

Today, [one in 28 children](#) has an incarcerated parent; [more than one-fifth of these kids](#) are under age four. Among adults, [one in five](#) has had a parent locked up. This leaves a population of millions of kids, many of whom are now young adults, who have suffered the consequences of parental incarceration. We must stop incarcerating so many people and, where separation still exists, we must take the necessary steps to mitigate the harms of parental incarceration.

- Adopt the [Children of Incarcerated Parents Bill of Rights](#) developed by the San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership, as well as a concrete framework for implementation.
- Replace or [substantially amend the Adoption and Safe Families Act](#) to ensure that adoption policies maximize preservation of the parent-child bond, including for parents who are or were recently incarcerated.
- Require that, when sentencing parents, judges consider noncustodial and community-based sentences first, and then justify any decision not to use such sentences.

- Require family impact statements for sentencing-related and prison-related bills.
- Codify the right to in-person, contact visits and substantially improve the visiting experience through innovative, people-centered changes to visiting facilities, procedures, and programming.
- Enact legislation that would require judges to consider placing or transferring incarcerated parents to prisons that are closer to where their children and families live, so as to support maintenance of the parent-child bond.
- Give kids the right to transition services and provide them with reunification planning, which helps stabilize families immediately following parental incarceration. Such services should include assignment of a case worker — with a caseload that allows for meaningful engagement and attention — who can help kids navigate the system and access resources.
- Allow and openly encourage the Bureau of Prisons to let people serve the last 12 months of their sentences at home in order to preserve and strengthen relationships with their children.





PLANK #10:

Ease legal challenges to address racial inequity and abolish slavery in prisons.

Every year, states, private companies, and the military use unpaid or poorly paid prison labor to save millions of dollars. Meanwhile, legal hurdles prevent advocates from challenging practices that produce extraordinary race-based inequity. These injustices must end.

- Support a constitutional amendment to eliminate the [“exception clause”](#) of the Thirteenth Amendment, which continues to allow involuntary servitude in prisons and jails.
- Support the establishment of a federal commission to study and develop reparations proposals for African Americans. The commission should examine slavery and discrimination in the colonies and in the United States from 1619 to the present, and it should recommend appropriate remedies.
- Ensure that the employment rights, including wages, of incarcerated or detained workers in federal, state, and local prisons, jails, and detention centers, are regulated by the respective labor authority in the jurisdiction. All workers should be paid the prevailing wage in their jurisdictions.
- Support statutory changes to Section 1983 of the Civil Rights Act of 1871, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (1974), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and potentially other statutes to allow “disparate impact” claims.
- Repeal the Prison Litigation Reform Act (1996).
- Repeal the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996.

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III.

Rebuild Communities

PLANK #11:

Rebalance spending priorities by investing in communities.

In the United States, our spending priorities are all wrong: We spend billions on jails and prisons, including \$38 million every day to detain people who are simply awaiting trial, while neglecting the upfront services and infrastructure that communities really need. As reforms cause the criminal-legal system to shrink, a reinvestment framework should redirect government dollars *away* from the criminal-legal system and *toward* the noncarceral social programs and infrastructure that communities need.

- At the state level, create a transparent, comprehensive framework for evaluating the state “savings” associated with criminal-legal reforms and place this money into a Community Reinvestment Fund. Dedicate all money in the Community Reinvestment Fund to noncarceral programming and infrastructure.
- At the federal level, repeal and replace the [harmful provisions](#) within the 1994 Crime Bill with noncarceral investments in communities, as determined through a [“People’s Assembly process”](#) that draws input from directly affected communities nationwide.
- At the federal level, establish a Community Reinvestment Fund that collects money from several sources — such as general appropriations and reduced spending in the federal criminal-legal system — and launch a Community Reinvestment Program competition. Through this competition, provide grants to states that make specified reforms to their criminal-legal systems and build a framework for reinvesting 100 percent of realized savings into noncarceral social services, supports, and infrastructure investments.
- At the federal level, form a partnership initiative (“Reimagining Public Safety”) between the Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, and other relevant agencies to make grants that help communities address the social factors increasing jail populations at the local level. Include technical assistance as part of this program, helping ensure that all communities can design effective proposals that apply best practices in needs assessment, program development, and program evaluation.

PLANK #12: Reimagine reentry, probation, and parole.

Every year, [more than 600,000 people](#) return home from prison, and [more than 9 million](#) leave local jails. These individuals face extraordinary barriers to success. We must minimize barriers to reentry success and provide holistic, coordinated supports for reentering individuals and their families.

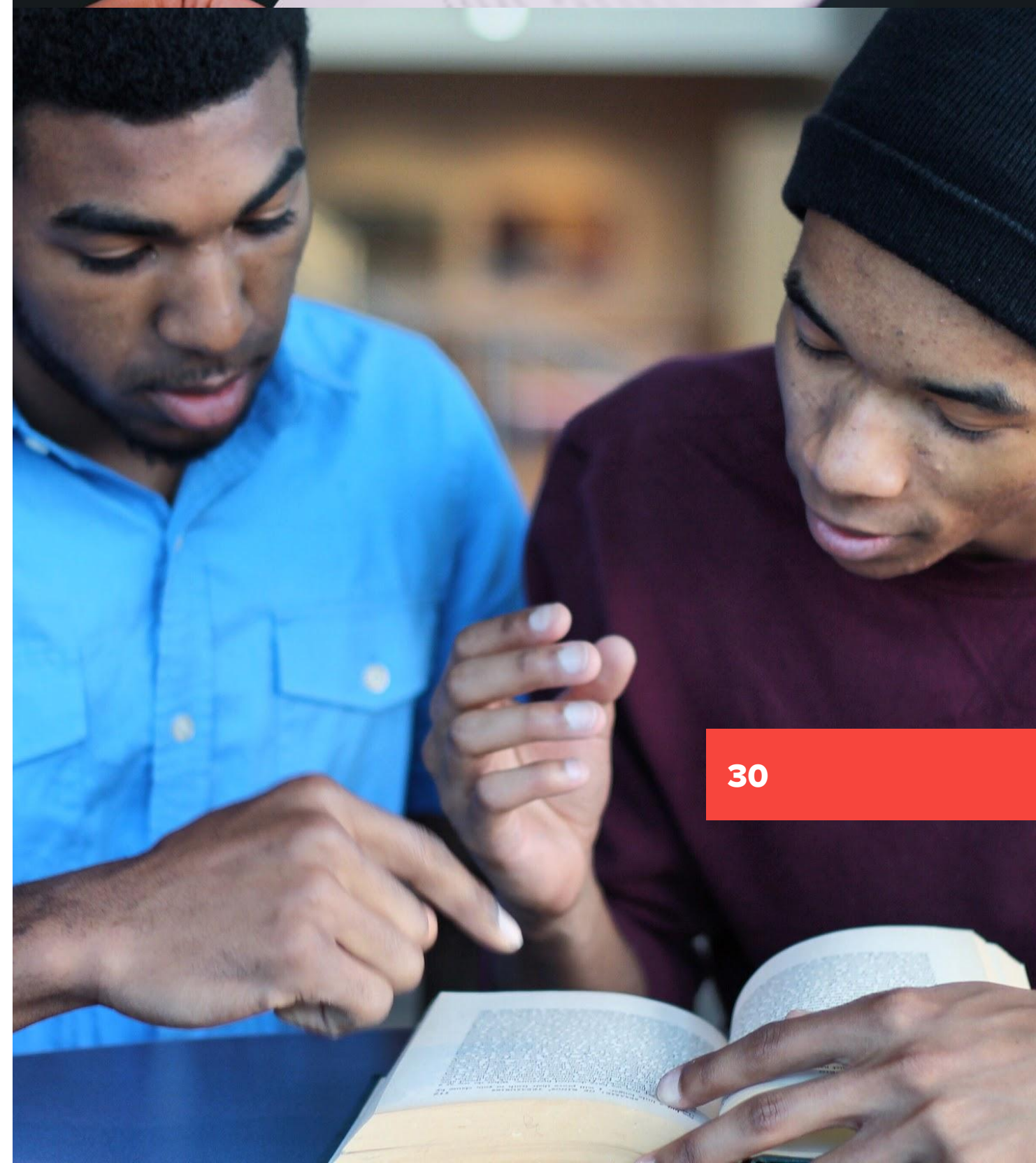
- Restore voting rights to currently and formerly incarcerated people, ensuring that no one ever loses the right to vote. In addition, ensure currently incarcerated people — including people detained before trial — have access to absentee ballots or onsite polling stations so they have the opportunity to exercise their right to vote.
- Award federal, state, and local contracts to businesses that affirmatively hire individuals with arrest or conviction records, including worker cooperatives operated by formerly incarcerated people. Furthermore, invest in employment opportunities that benefit formerly incarcerated individuals, including grants for entrepreneurship, technical assistance to businesses that hire formerly incarcerated individuals, state-led affirmative hiring programs, and worker cooperatives operated by formerly incarcerated people.
- Remove restrictions on individuals accessing public housing, employment, occupational licenses, driver's licenses, and public benefits. [Automatically seal](#) and expunge records immediately upon release for misdemeanors and within several years for certain felonies.

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- At the federal level, introduce legislation like a Reentry Accountability Act, which incentivizes networks of local actors to coordinate wraparound services for reentering individuals.
- Remove barriers to post-secondary education by reinstating Pell grant eligibility — without restrictions — for individuals during and after incarceration.
- Restrict the use of algorithm-based “risk assessment” tools to make parole, probation, or other early release determinations, including which individuals will receive rehabilitation/reentry services and which individuals are eligible for parole, probation, and/or earning credits toward early release to a residential reentry center or home confinement.
- Remove parole boards’ unilateral discretion to make final decisions by: developing a presumption of parole if an incarcerated individual meets certain eligibility requirements; and ensuring that incarcerated individuals have a right to appeal parole decisions to a court of law. Prohibit the denial of parole due to an incarcerated person’s lack of resources and, instead, require the state to identify the resources needed.
- Provide holistic, coordinated supports for reentering individuals and their families to ensure success.

- Start counting incarcerated individuals in their home districts rather than in the districts of the prisons where they reside, bringing an end to [prison gerrymandering](#).
- Shorten the length of terms of supervision and of supervised release. End lifetime probation.
- Ensure supervisory conditions imposed are severely limited and related to ensuring individuals' success in their communities.
- Require supervising officers to have a background in community-based nonprofit work, social work, and/or holistic healing, as well as training in trauma-informed care and restorative justice practices. (See *Plank #6: End jails and prisons as we know them in America* in the [full platform](#).)
- Reform the probation revocation process by setting clearer and fairer guidelines for violations, developing intermediate sanctions for violations, and severely reducing prison admission for violations.
- Categorically eliminate reincarceration for technical violations.



PLANK #13:

Build a school-to-opportunity pipeline.

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The school-to-prison pipeline has become a front door into the criminal-legal system, funneling youth into jails and prisons — and, in so doing, denying them the very opportunities that schools are meant to provide. We must end the criminalization of children and instead create a holistic, multidimensional pipeline to opportunity.

- Provide a child benefit — a refundable tax credit or other financial boost to parents or guardians of minor children — that eliminates child poverty, ensuring that all kids have the necessary resources to thrive.
- Provide positive school supports that contribute to safe, just, and welcoming climates for all students. This includes counselors, staff training, restorative practices, culturally responsive Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, and mental health support for students in crisis.
- Ban police from being stationed in schools. Eliminate federal funding for infrastructure and personnel that criminalize students and school environments.
- Reinstatement the Departments of Justice and Education’s [joint guidance](#) on reducing racial discrimination in school discipline.
- Reintroduce and pass provisions that encourage states to raise the minimum age of adult court jurisdiction to 21.
- Provide technical assistance and grant funds to community schools that provide extra counselors, trauma-informed care, and wraparound services to families to support the extra services provided.
- Create a clear, time-bound plan for closing youth prisons and replacing them with community-based, rehabilitation-focused continua of care. California, Texas, New York, Virginia, and Kansas have successfully closed some of their youth prisons.
- Prohibit arrests, summonses/tickets, and any criminal charges for school-based disciplinary behavior and remove all criminalizing infrastructure from schools.
- End the [Department of Defense 1033 program](#), including its transfer of military equipment to schools.

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PLANK #14: End the War on Drugs.

The failed War on Drugs has devastated thousands of communities, particularly those of color, while overwhelming our jails and prisons. We must immediately end these failed policies and proactively invest in those communities that have been harmed most.

- At the state level, legalize marijuana through a racial justice framework that focuses on access, equity, and repairing the damage of prohibition. At the federal level, end the prohibition of marijuana and implement marijuana reform through a racial justice lens, as would be achieved by the [Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement Act](#).
- In the interim, reinstate the Department of Justice's 2013 [guidance](#) that allowed states, with minimal federal interference, to legalize marijuana.
- Remove criminal penalties for drug possession and certain trafficking offenses that, over the last 40 years, have caused an explosion in our incarcerated population. Ensure that this approach includes resentencing, expunging records, affording relief for immigrant communities, and funding reinvestment in the communities that have been most impacted by the War on Drugs. Work toward dismantling the current paradigm of drug criminalization and replacing the current system with a regulatory approach that treats substance use as a public health issue, including through investments in medical care, mental health care, community empowerment, and other evidence-based wellness practices that reduce overdose deaths, such as syringe and naloxone programs, drug checking, safe consumption spaces, and medication-assisted treatment.
- [Overhaul the Drug Enforcement Administration](#) and ensure that any federal entity focusing on substance use conducts its work using a public health approach (*i.e.*, through harm reduction models, treatment, and research).
- Target any dollars “saved” from criminal-legal reforms to rebuild those communities that have been most damaged by the War on Drugs, including by providing resources to address addiction and other behavioral health issues.

Signed By:

Abyssinian Baptist Church/
#UPTheVote901
Advance Peace
Advancement Project, National Office
African American Ministers In Action
Alternate ROOTS
American Civil Liberties Union
American Friends Service Committee
Arizona Office
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination
Committee
Amistad Law Project
Arab American Institute
Arizona Coalition for Change
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
Brooklyn Community Bail Fund
Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of
Youth
Campaign for Youth Justice
Campaign Zero
Catholic Network US
Center for Law and Social Policy
(CLASP)
Center for Popular Democracy
Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law
at NYU School of Law
Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for
Race and Justice
Chicago Community Bond Fund
Church of Scientology National Affairs
Office
Color Of Change
Communities United
Community Change

Community Works
Connecticut Bail Fund
Defending Rights & Dissent
Detroit Justice Center
Drug Policy Alliance
Entre Hermanos
Essie Justice Group
Fair and Just Prosecution
Fathers & Families Coalition of America
Free Hearts
Georgia Coalition for the People's Agenda
Global Justice Institute
Government Information Watch
Harvard Criminal Justice Policy Program
Health in Justice Action Lab, Northeastern
University School of Law
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Innocence Project
Insight Center
Interfaith Action for Human Rights
Ithaca Prisoner Justice Network
Japanese American Citizens League
Just City - Memphis
Justice Roundtable
Justice Strategies
Juvenile Law Center
Lambda Legal
LatinoJustice
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the
San Francisco Bay Area
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under
Law
Media Alliance
Media Mobilizing Project
Million Hoodies Movement for Justice
MomsRising

Mothers Against Police Brutality
Muslim Public Affairs Council
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational
Fund, Inc.
National Action Network
National Association for the
Advancement of Colored People
National Association of Human Rights
Workers
National Association of Social Workers
National Center for Transgender
Equality
National Center for Youth Law
National Crittenton
National Disability Rights Network
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Juvenile Defender Center
National Juvenile Justice Network
National Law Center on Homelessness
& Poverty
National LGBTQ Task Force
National Organization for Women
National Religious Campaign Against
Torture Action Fund
Organize Florida
OVEC-Ohio Valley Environmental
Coalition
People For the American Way
Policing and Social Justice Project at
Brooklyn College
PolicyLink
Power U Center for Social Change
Pretrial Justice Institute

Prison Policy Initiative
Racial Justice Action Center
Racial Justice NOW!
Rapid Shift
Richmond Community Bail Fund
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
Silicon Valley De-Bug
Southern Coalition for Social Justice
State Voices
StoptheDrugWar.org
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human
Rights
Take on Wall Street
Texas Civil Rights Project
Texas Fair Defense Project
The Bail Project
The Black Alliance for Just Immigration
(BAJI)
The Legal Aid Society
The National Council For Incarcerated and
Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls
(The Council)
The Southern Poverty Law Center
The Taifa Group
UFCW MINORITY COALITION
United We Dream
Venner Consulting, Inc.
Voto Latino
Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil
Rights and Urban Affairs
WE GOT US NOW
Worth Rises
Youth First Initiative





1620 L Street NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20036



(202) 466-3434



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