

# Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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## FOLLOW THE MONEY

Years ago, people who had been working to accurately describe and change the police, court and penal system pointed out to us newcomers a most unfortunate and characteristic feature of many of our efforts based on incomplete understanding of how things really worked: every time something new was developed and adopted, instead of replacing accepted methods of dealing with the situation, everything that already existed was kept and the new ways just added on. And so it still goes. There is now imprisonment and parole and probation and intensive probation and ankle bracelets. Nothing is dropped. Only now, we have more powerful than ever before technologies that have the added benefits for those who run them of further concentrating both power and profits. Current examples follow.

As Michelle Alexander states eloquently in a November 2018 New York Times article, "Many of the current reform efforts contain the seeds of the next generation of 'e-carceration' that may prove more dangerous and more difficult to challenge."

Bail "reform" is a case in point. What's taking the place of cash bail may prove even worse. For example, in California a "presumption of detention" will effectively replace eligibility for immediate release.

And, much worse, given what appears to be a so far unshakeable confidence in The Truth Created by Computers, computer algorithms are facilitating the determination of who should be caged. In California, New Jersey and New York, for starters, "risk assessment" algorithms are used recommend to judges whether a person who's been arrested should be released.

They are based on factors that are not only highly correlated with ethnicity and socio-economic class, but are also "significantly influenced by pervasive bias" in the police, court and penal system. They are, in fact, opinions embedded in mathematics--that is, opinions masquerading as facts.

Challenging these biased algorithms may be more difficult than challenging

discrimination by the police, prosecutors and judges.

Even if you're lucky enough to be released from a brick-and-mortar jail thanks to a computer algorithm, you will most likely be required to have an expensive monitoring device shackled to your ankle, which are used more and more. Such a GPS tracking device would be provided by a for-profit company that will probably charge you around \$300 a month. Your permitted zones of movement may make it difficult or impossible to get or keep a job, attend school, care for your kids or visit family members. You're effectively sentenced to an "open air digital prison." One false step can bring on the cops.

And, to repeat, who benefits? For-profit corporations. Just four of them have most of the private contracts to provide electronic monitoring for people on parole in some 30 states. Their combined annual revenue is more than \$200 million just for e-monitoring. One of them is GEO, also one of the largest for-profit prison companies. And so, growing numbers of people find themselves subject to perpetual criminalization, surveillance, monitoring and control.

And guess what? It turns out that what are referred to as "efforts to reduce recidivism through intensive supervision" are not working. For whom, one may ask. It is not hard to imagine that, if one really wanted to, reducing the requirements and burdens of community supervision so that people could more easily hold jobs, care for children and escape the stigma of criminality would have a more positive outcome.

If the goal were really to end mass incarceration and mass criminalization--firmly based on racism and oppression--digital prisons are not an answer. They just make a lot of money for those who already have more than their share. New systems that treat poor people and people of color as commodities to be bought, sold, evaluated and managed for profit must be labelled and judged for what they actually do. And then, stopped!

Resource: Michelle Alexander, New York Times

## IN MEMORIAM -- 2018

01/18	Anthony Allen Shore	Texas	07/18	Robert J. van Hook	Ohio
01/30	William Earl Rayford	Texas	08/09	William Ray "Billy" Irick	Tenn.
02/01	John David Battaglia	Texas	08/14	Carey Dean Moore	Nebr.
02/22	Eric Scott Branch	Florida	09/26	Troy James Clark	Texas
03/15	Michael Wayne Eggers	Alabama	09/27	Daniel Clate Acker	Texas
03/15	Carlton Michael Gary	Georgia	10/29	Rodney Scott Berget	S.D.
03/27	Rosendo Rodriguez III	Texas	11/01	Edmund George Zagorski	Tenn.
04/19	Walter Leroy Moody, Jr.	Alabama	11/14	Roberto Ramos Moreno	Texas
04/25	Erick Daniel Davila	Texas	12/04	Joseph Christopher Garcia	Texas
05/04	Robert Earl Butts, Jr.	Georgia	12/06	David Earl Miller	Tenn.
05/16	Juan Edward Castillo	Texas	12/11	Alvin Avon Braziel, Jr.	Texas
06/27	Daniel Paul "Danny" Bible	Texas	12/13	Jose Antonio Jimenez	Florida
07/17	Christopher Anthony Young	Texas			

There were 25 people, all men, executed in 2018. About one in seven execution sentences in 2018 came as the result of the jurisdictions that allow judges to impose execution sentences without unanimous jury recommendations.

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**To receive the CPR Newsletter by postal mail monthly, send us up to 12 self-addressed, stamped envelopes (with the CPR return address).**

**Keep sending us address changes and renewal requests in order for us to maintain our *only* permanent mailing list--the one for our January holiday card/new calendar, as accurately as possible.**

**Also, note that the correct address to be sure to reach us at is: PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504. Some resource address listings are incorrect in this regard.**

**And still: NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS; for our protection, please do *not* mark envelopes addressed to us as "Legal Mail."**

**Many, many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons Project for posting our Newsletter on-line for free downloading and distribution. It is at:**

**[www.realcostofprisonsproject.org](http://www.realcostofprisonsproject.org)--this is a GREAT site! Thank you for all your support!**

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**¿ Desede cuándo el gobierno de Estados Unidos comenzó su hostilidad a la revolución Cubana?**

El bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero decretado oficialmente el 3 de febrero de 1962 por los Estados Unidos en contra de Cuba; había más de seiscientos planes de atentados contra la vida de Fidel Castro y otros dirigentes; la Ley Helms Burton de 1996 internacionalizan el bloqueo y establecen el plan de recolonización de Cuba. Han sido más de cincuenta años de hostilidad por todos los medios, primero para impedir el triunfo y después para destruir a la Revolución Cubana.

## The Indivisibility of Justice

The Birmingham Alabama Civil Rights Institute recently revoked its presentation of the Reverend Fred L. Shuttleworth Award to Angela Davis. The pressure to do so came from local staunchly pro-Israel groups and individuals, without the participation of all of the organization's Board members, three of who subsequently resigned. The Mayor of Birmingham also protested the action as have the City Council and the School Board among many across the country.

The award is named in honor of a early Birmingham civil rights leader whom Angela Davis, who grew up in that city, knew as a child. Her response was: "the rescinding of the award and invitation to speak was 'not primarily an attack against me, but rather against the very spirit of 'the indivisibility of justice.' In particular because of her long term support of justice for Palestine."

Davis has supported the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement ("BDS") which works to organize economic pressure on Israel to end the occupation of the West Bank, treat Palestinians equally under the, law and allow the return of Palestinian refugees. She is among a growing number who have compared the struggles of Palestinians to those of African-Americans.

"I support Palestinian political prisoners just as I support current political prisoners in the Basque Country, in Catalunya, in India, and in other parts of the world. I have indeed expressed opposition to policies and practices of the state of Israel, as I express similar opposition to U.S. support for the Israeli occupation of Palestine and to other discriminatory U.S. policies."

And, "Jails and prisons are designed to break human beings, to convert to population into specimens in a zoo." Her books include: "Are Prisons Obsolete?", and "Freedom is a Constant Struggle"