

# Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504

June 2020

## Resources re Covid-19 and Imprisonment

**Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB)— Chuco's Justice Center  
7625 S. Central Ave, Los Angeles CA 90001**

Is a coalition of grassroots organizations working to reduce the number of people incarcerated in California by fighting to stop new cages from being built and to shut down existing jails, prisons and immigration detention centers. The brutality of policing doesn't end in the so called free world. Corrections Officers in prisons are police too.

We want action now: Our Demands  
-acknowledgement that racism is a public health crisis and that prisons are systemically racist  
-divestment from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation/state police, local police and sheriff agencies  
-investment of all funds from those agencies into community-based resources  
- a revision of the penal code that defines crime and punishment  
- changes in sentencing structures to end extremely long sentences  
- and mass releases of people from California cages

California's state prison system is notoriously overcrowded. The overall prison system budget has grown steadily every year, from \$8.9 billion (2012-2013) to a proposed \$13.4 billion in 2020-21. This includes \$1.5 billion for local "community corrections" and nearly \$800 million to expand and enhance law enforcement activities.....Defunding prisons means dollars for the communities that need them most. We demand care, not cages!

**The Sentencing Project  
1705 DeSales Street NW - 8th Floor  
Washington DC 20036**

Decarceration policies it champions are: Emergency Community Supervision Act-for those with serious health conditions; COVID-19 Correctional Facility Emergency Response Act-to promote social distancing; Expanded access to federal compassionate release, which would allow petitions from people sentenced before 1987.

**Prison Policy Initiative (PPI)  
P.O. Box 127, Northampton MA 01061**

**Protect people by reducing jail overcrowding:**

- > Detroit Michigan area: released 384 in Wayne County and 150 from Oakland County jails
- > California reduced bail to \$0 for most misdemeanor and some low-level felony charges
- > North Dakota: Cass County Jail population has declined by over 30% and Stutsman County's by about 50%
- > Massachusetts' Plymouth and Norfolk County jails have reduced their populations by around 20%
- > Colorado's El Paso County Jail has dropped by about 30%
- > Florida's Miami-Dade County Jail has dropped about 20% to about 3,200
- > Ohio's Cuyahoga County Jail has reduced its population more than 30% by releasing 900 people
- > Virginia's N.R.A.D.C. has reduced their jail population by about 20%.

### **Five ways to slow the pandemic:**

1. Reduce the number of people in local jails. Do so by:
  - > reducing jail admissions & n
  - > releasing more people
2. Reduce the number of people in state and federal prisons. The simplest way is to refuse admissions for technical violations of probation and parole rules. In 2016, 60,000 people were returned to state prison for behaviors that, for someone not on probation or parole, would not be a crime. States have many options for how to release individuals.
3. Eliminate unnecessary face-to-face contact for those on probation, parole, and various required registries.
4. Make correctional health care to be more humane and efficient so that it protects both health and human dignity.
5. Don't make this time even more stressful for families—or more profitable for prison telephone providers—during this time when visiting is suspended. Provide unlimited free phone calls, and free video calling options.

# Levantamiento y abolicion

El levantamiento contra la violencia apolicial y el racismo hacia la gente negra continúa extendiéndose por todo Estados Unidos y en países do todo el mundo,, generando un ajuste de cuentas en los pasillos del poder y en las calles. Las protestas multitudinarias tras el asesinato de George Floyd a manos de la policía en Minneapolis el 25 de mayo cambiaron drásticamente la opinión pública sobre la policía y el racismo sistémico, al tiempo que la consigna "Desfinancien la policía" se convierte en un grito de lucha del movimiento.

Una nunca sabe cuándo las condiciones pueden dar lugar a una coyuntura como la actual, que modifica rápidamente la conciencia popular y, de repente, nos permite avanzar hacia un cambio radical. La intensidad de estas manifestaciones no se va a poder sostener en el tiempo, pero tenemos que prepararnos para cambiar el método y abordar estos problemas en diferentes ámbitos.

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### THE LEAST READ PART OF THE NEWSLETTER:

To receive the CPR Newsletter by postal mail monthly, send us a self-addressed, stamped envelope for every month's issue, up to 12 at a time. Put the CPR return address in the upper left-hand corner of each envelope.

Keep sending us address changes to help us keep our mailing list as accurate as possible.

NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS. Marking your letters *Legal Mail* hurts us.

We do not have a web site because we are a *small* group of volunteers and do not have the resources to maintain one.

Many, many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons project for posting our Newsletter on-line monthly for free downloading and distribution. All issues since 2009 are at: [www.realcostofprisons.org](http://www.realcostofprisons.org) - this is a GREAT site! THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT!

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# Una zona autnoma

Con barricadas, manifestantes en Seattle establecen una zona autónoma alrededor duna comisaría mientras la policía se retira del lugar. Manifestantes claman victoria tras establecer una zona barricada alrededor de un edificio donde se encuentra una comisaría de Policía. En ese lugar se registraron protestas, con una brutal represión, durante ocho días. La comisaría se encuentra actualmente tapiada con tablas. El 5 de junio, Seattle anunció una prohibición de 30 días sobre el uso de gas lacrimógeno.

# ACTION IN NEW MEXICO

At the start of the pandemic, the New Mexico Supreme Court issued a rule change that allows those imprisoned to request reconsideration of their sentence at any time. This new rule is supposed to help reduce the number of incarcerated people who are at the highest risk for Covid-19.

In response to this New Mexico rule change, a group of volunteer lawyers, law students and social workers created "The Resentencing Project." They drafted a *pro se* ("do it yourself") form for a court motion that those imprisoned can file asking the court to impose a new sentence that makes it possible to get out of custody immediately. This motion is not a *habeas* petition; it's a motion for reduction of sentence for people at risk for Covid-19. That means that it would not affect a *habeas* petition if you already have one filed.

To get a copy of the motion described above, ask someone to send an e-mail to [sheilainsantafe@gmail.com](mailto:sheilainsantafe@gmail.com) with your current postal address and one will be mailed to you. We are recruiting volunteers to provide *pro bono* (free) representation for people who are most likely to actually get released. You may be eligible for free representation if you are:

- > medically vulnerable to Covid-19 because of asthma, diabetes, heart disease or have other serious health issues, such as being immuno-compromised;
- > past the age of 70;
- > doing a sentence for "non-mandatory" time;
- > doing a sentence for a non-Serious Violent Offense (SVO)-getting day-for-day good-time;
- > doing a sentence pursuant to a court verdict, not a plea deal; and
- > have a place to live upon release.

If you do not meet these criteria, you are probably not eligible for free representation, but you can request a copy of the motion to file for yourself, that is *pro se*. The Resentencing Project is not a quick solution, however its lawyers fight long and hard to get policies and practices to keep people safer while in custody and to get more people out.

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"This latest murder-by-cop has brought attention to the age-old theme of black subjugation and the use of the police to 'dominate' minorities and otherwise exploit us. Yet there is a link from 'excessive force' on the streets leading to an unprecedented number of 'extreme sentences' which posit that we are incapable of change."

- D.W., CA