

PRISON
POLICY INITIATIVE

2021-2022
ANNUAL REPORT

August 2022

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“PPI is one of the most imaginative research groups illuminating the dark recesses of our carceral landscape”

-Pete Brook
Prison Photography

Executive Director's letter

Dear Friends,

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

Over this last year, we've continued to publish timeless resources that serve as our movement's foundation, including:

- An updated version of *Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie* with 31 visualizations to offer the most comprehensive view available of how many people are locked up in the U.S. — and where they are being held — since the COVID-19 pandemic began (p. 4).
- A series of reports uncovering the racial and socio-economic disparities in the criminal legal system with research showing that, for example, most people in prison were arrested for the first time as children, and that 20% of people in prison were homeless before their incarceration (p. 7-8).
- An advocacy toolkit that strengthens the movement to end mass incarceration by making the skills, techniques, and resources that we've developed over the past two decades public and easily accessible to advocates on the ground working for change (p. 21).

I'm particularly proud of our response to the devastating Supreme Court reversal of *Roe v. Wade*. As advocates across the country warned about the far-reaching consequences of this decision, reporters immediately reached out to us for guidance on how this decision would impact women in custody. Through our previous work — and building on the efforts of Dr. Carolyn Sufrin and the Pregnancy in Prison Statistics Project — we helped to show that most women in prison were already living in a post-*Roe* world with almost no access to abortion care. And after the decision, we immediately highlighted how the 216,000 women on probation and parole in the states with so-called “trigger-laws” will uniquely suffer. (People on probation and parole generally can't travel out of state, and certainly not to access a procedure banned in their home state.) (p. 13) Interventions like these are what we do best: using data to spotlight the true scope of the hardships that mass incarceration puts on already-marginalized people.

It's often tricky to tie specific policy changes to our work, but some of the wins we are proudest of include:

- The Hawaii Supreme Court relied on our COVID-response research and our States of Emergency report in an opinion explaining why the court intervened and mandated releases from that state's prisons during the pandemic (p. 10).
- Voters in Otsego County, Michigan — where we published an in-depth analysis of the worst jail assessment we had ever seen — rejected the county's ill-advised plan to expand the jail (p. 15).

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.

- More than a dozen states — most recently Rhode Island — have embraced our 20 year old campaign to protect democracy from mass incarceration by counting incarcerated people at home when drawing legislative districts (p. 17).
- The families of people held in California jails will save millions of dollars, thanks to our work with state regulators lowering the cost of phone calls to 7 cents a minute — down from a high of almost \$1/minute when we started our California regulatory advocacy (p. 19).

I'm proud of our accomplishments this year and honored you made it possible. Thank you for helping the Prison Policy Initiative play a vital part in the larger movement against mass incarceration and I look forward to sharing bigger victories with you over the year to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Wagner', written in a cursive style.

Peter Wagner
Executive Director
August 25, 2022

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 and our headquarters in western Massachusetts.

Staff

- Naila Awan, *Director of Advocacy*
- Wanda Bertram, *Communications Strategist*
- Aleks Kajstura, *Legal Director*
- Jenny Landon, *Development Director*
- Stephen Raheer, *General Counsel*
- Wendy Sawyer, *Research Director*
- Peter Wagner, *Executive Director*
- Leah Wang, *Research Analyst*
- Mike Wessler, *Communications Director*
- Emily Widra, *Senior Research Analyst*

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- Maanas Sharma, *Data Science and Policy Analysis intern*
- Sage Mitchell, *Programming*

Consultants

- Bill Cooper, *GIS*
- Bob Machuga, *Graphic Design*
- Jordan Miner, *Programming*
- Matt Mitchell, *Programming*
- Kevin Pyle, *Illustrations*

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- Andrea Fenster, *Staff Attorney*
- Tiana Herring, *Research Associate*

*Organizations for identification purposes only.

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Empowering the movement with facts

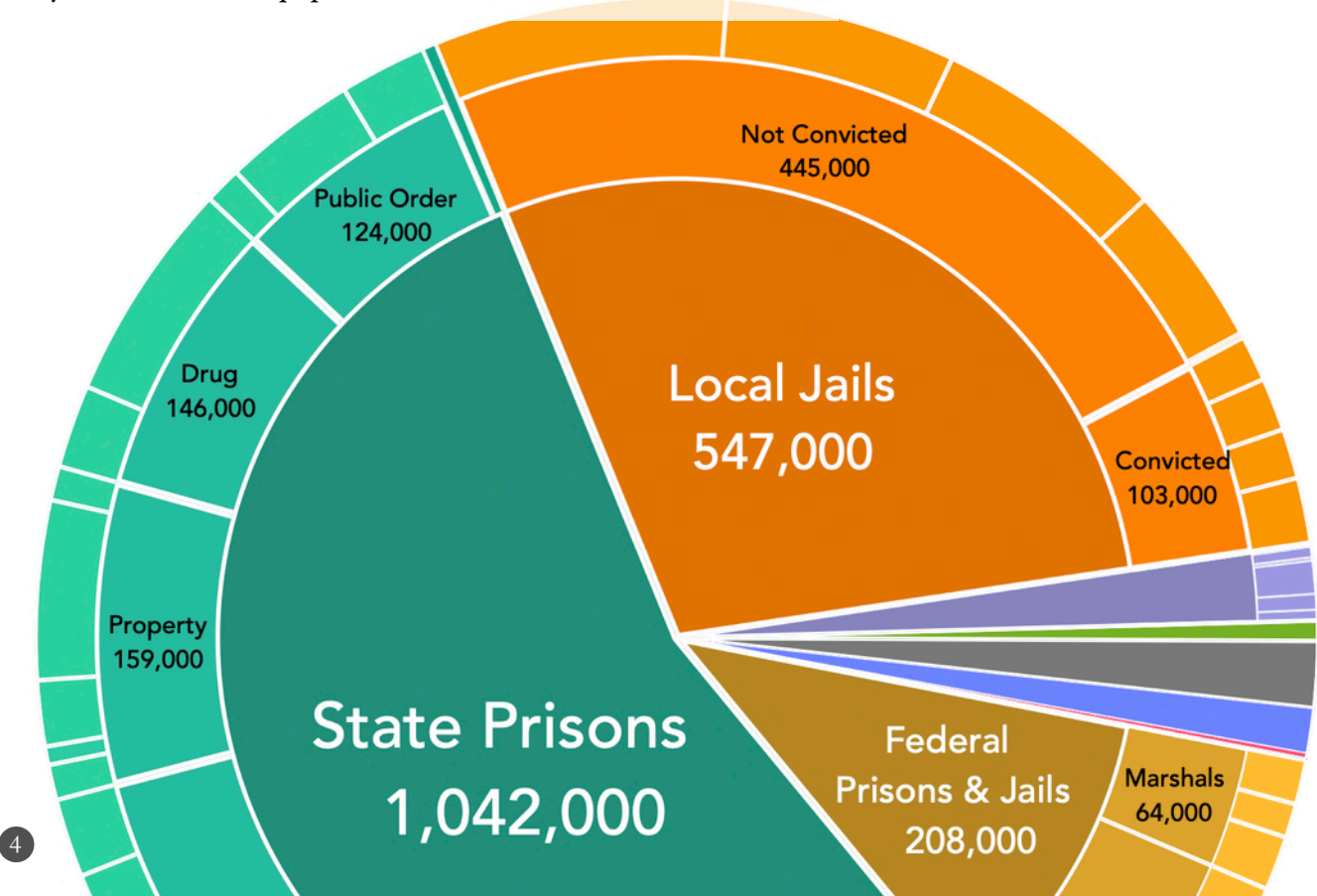
<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/national>

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 push for the end of mass incarceration. Highlights include:

Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2022

In our comprehensive report that serves as a cornerstone of the criminal justice reform movement, we piece together the most recent national data on systems of confinement to provide a snapshot of mass incarceration. The report includes a “myth-busting” section tackling frequent misconceptions about prison labor, the war on drugs, private prisons, what victims of crime want, and community supervision. Using powerful data visualizations, we highlight racial disparities behind bars, the number of people in pretrial detention, and other key facts. This new edition offers the most comprehensive view of mass incarceration since the pandemic began, and provides analysis of correctional population fluctuations due to COVID-19.



Economist

United States | Prisons

America's prison system is becoming more inhumane

Prisons are less crowded than before, but otherwise getting worse

Vox

Local jails are helping drive America's mass incarceration problem

The majority of people sitting in local jails haven't been convicted of a crime.

Filter

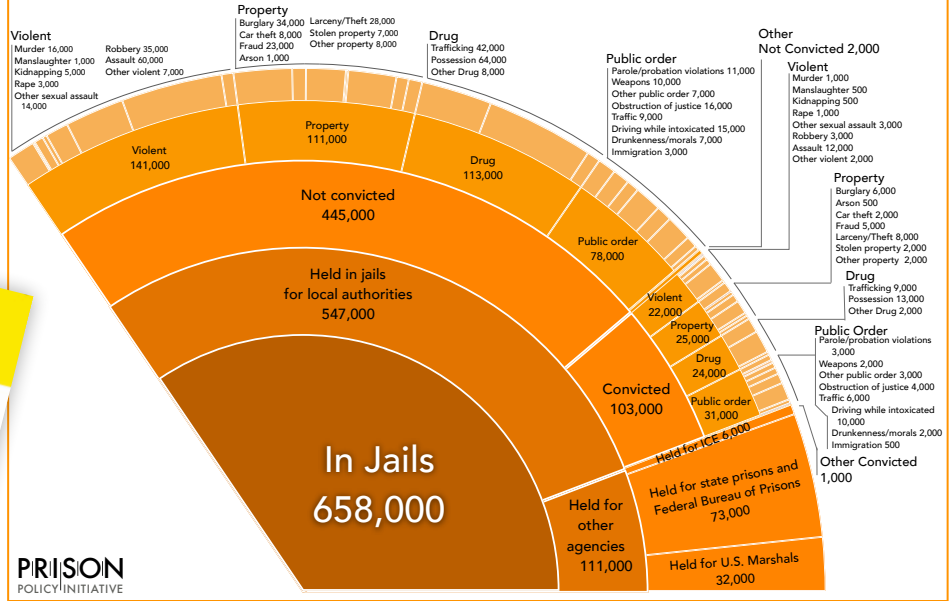
HOME > CANNABIS > EXPUNGEMENT > MARIJUANA > MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION > MASS INCARCERATION

Federal Legalization Still Wouldn't Free All Cannabis Prisoners

Alexander Lekhtman April 7, 2022

Prisons get all the attention, but 1 in 3 people behind bars is in a local jail

Jail incarceration rates are driven largely by local bail practices. Setting aside the 111,000 people held for other agencies, over 80% of those in jail under local authority have not been convicted and are presumed innocent.



Our *Whole Pie* report provides journalists with factual bedrock for their reporting, and is cited near daily in national outlets like *Vox*, *Forbes*, *CNN*, and *USA Today*, and state and local publications like the *Asheville Citizen Times* and *Oklahoma Watch*.

States of Incarceration: The Global Context 2021

In this analysis of global incarceration rates, we use data visualizations to show how each state's incarceration rate compares to other countries. The results reveal just how extreme our use of incarceration is: Even supposedly progressive states like Massachusetts and New York have incarceration rates more than double that of other NATO countries, and 24 states, when viewed as countries, have the highest incarceration rate in the world.

Beth Shelburne @bshelburne

As @ALGOP enters caucus discussions about building more prisons, I hope they consider that Alabama locks people up at a higher rate than almost every NATION in the WORLD & real reform involves reducing incarceration rates. Full report by @PrisonPolicy:

| Country | Incarceration rate per 100,000 population |
|----------------|---|
| Alabama | 938 |
| United States | 664 |
| United Kingdom | 129 |
| Portugal | 111 |
| Canada | 104 |
| France | 93 |
| Belgium | 93 |
| Italy | 89 |
| Luxembourg | 84 |
| Denmark | 72 |
| Netherlands | 63 |
| Norway | 54 |
| Iceland | 33 |

Source: <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2021.html>

The Gazette SUBSCRIBE

Iowa has an incarceration crisis of global proportions

Prison beds in Iowa don't tend to stay empty for long. The system will find someone to fill them.

Source NM

POLICE & PRISON

New Mexico imprisons people at a higher rate than some countries

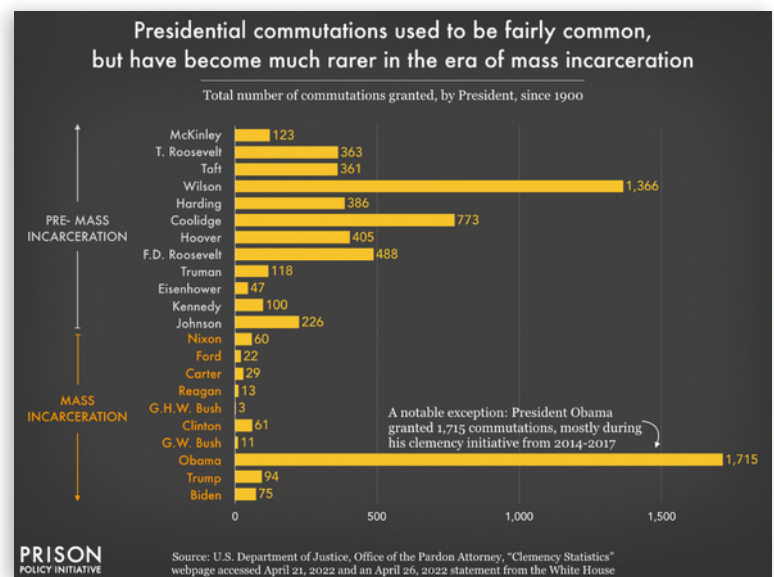
Lawmaker says state is behind even Texas on criminal justice reform

BEACON

Report: Maine imprisons people at rate similar to Russia

Executive inaction: States and the federal government fail to use commutations as a release mechanism

State and federal officials have the power to spare people from excessive prison sentences, but overwhelmingly underuse this ability. In this report, we survey eight states and find that, on average, only one person per 10,000 receives a commutation annually. To empower policymakers and advocates to fix this broken system, we offer a number of reforms that state and federal government should adopt to use commutation powers more effectively and consistently.



Uncovering disparities in the system

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

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

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

Beyond the count: A deep dive into state prison populations

We know how many people are in state prisons, but what do we really know about who they are or how they ended up there? In this report, we do a deep-dive into the demographics of people in state prison, showing that incarcerated people have endured disadvantage and poverty all the way back to childhood. Key data shows that most people in state prison were arrested for the first time when they were children. Over half meet the criteria for substance use disorder, suggesting that even those who aren't locked up for drug offenses are still victims of our country's choice to criminalize substance use rather than treat it as a health issue.

Jenn Burrill
@JennBurrill

Prisons and jails obscure the devastation wrought by decades of discriminatory housing policies. Over 20% of people in state prisons were homeless or housing-insecure before their incarceration. Behind bars, they're hidden from sight.

| Category | People in state prisons 2016 pre-incarceration | Total U.S. population 2016 age 16 and older |
|--------------|--|---|
| UNEMPLOYMENT | 14.8% | 4.7% |
| HOMELESSNESS | 4.9% | 0.2% |

Text from infographic: Almost 15% of people in state prisons in 2016 reported being both out of work and looking for a job in the 30 days prior to the arrest that led to their current incarceration. Almost 5% of people in state prisons in 2016 reported experiencing homelessness in the 30 days prior to the arrest that led to their current incarceration. Meanwhile, 0.17% of the total U.S. population was estimated to be experiencing homelessness on a given night in 2016.

Sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics' Survey of Prison Inmates, 2016 data analyzed by the Prison Policy Initiative; Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's 2016 Annual Homeless Assessment Report

PRISON POLICY INITIATIVE

Many people in state prisons grew up facing serious family, housing, economic, and educational challenges

Instead of receiving support, most were criminalized as kids.

| Challenge | Percentage |
|--|------------|
| Parent ever incarcerated | 33% |
| Foster care before 18 | 18% |
| Homeless before 18 | 12% |
| Family in subsidized or public housing before 18 | 19% |
| Family received public assistance before 18 | 42% |
| Did not complete high school | 62% |
| Arrested before age 16 | 38% |
| Arrested before age 19 | 68% |

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics' Survey of Prison Inmates, 2016 data analyzed by the Prison Policy Initiative

PRISON POLICY INITIATIVE

Keith Wattlely
@Keith_Wattlely

It's almost as if it's a choice to invest in prisons instead of giving communities what they actually need.

Chronic Punishment: The unmet health needs of people in state prisons

This report offers the most recent national data on the health of people in U.S. state prisons. We find that people in prison suffer from several chronic illnesses and infectious diseases at disproportionate rates — such as hepatitis C, HIV, and mental illness — and prisons are failing to get many people the treatment they need. We also find that 50% of incarcerated people lacked health insurance before prison, a discovery that adds new depth to our understanding of how the criminal justice system punishes poverty.

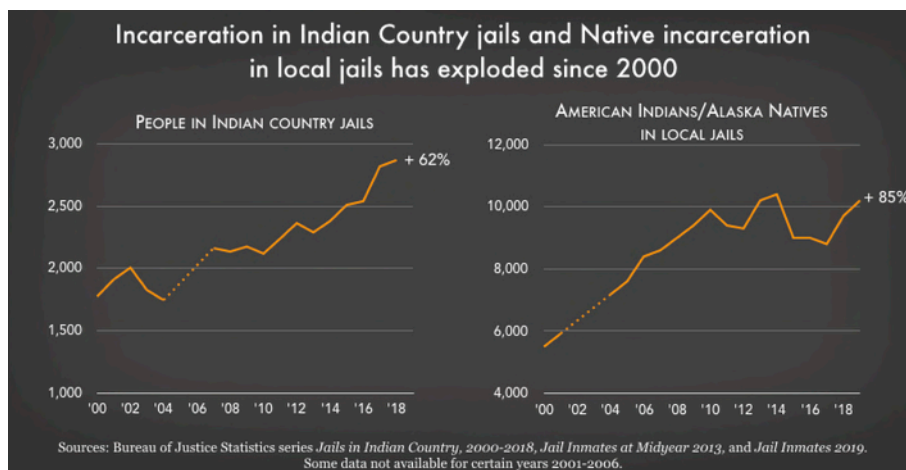
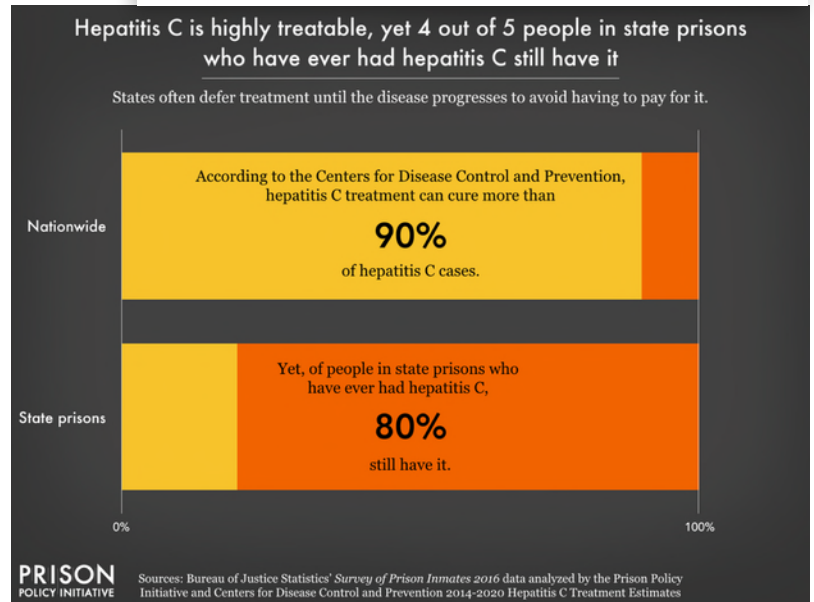
What the “Survey of Prison Inmates” tells us about trans people in state prison

Trans and LGBTQ people are overrepresented at every stage of the criminal legal system. In this briefing, we focus on the lives of some transgender incarcerated people — both before and during their confinement.

Respondents to the survey were very likely to be people of color and younger than the average age of the general incarcerated population. As youth, they experienced homelessness, foster care placements, arrests and juvenile incarceration.


The U.S. criminal legal system disproportionately hurts Native people: the data, visualized

Native people experience disproportionately high levels of criminalization and incarceration. In this briefing, we aggregate all of the existing data about Native people in the justice system, and explain the persistent gaps in data collection that hide this layer of racial and ethnic disparity.




Where People in Prison Come From: The geography of mass incarceration

What communities do people who are incarcerated come from? It's a simple question, with huge implications, that until recently was impossible to answer. However, thanks to recent reforms to end prison gerrymandering in more than a dozen states, the data is finally available to answer it. We've published the data for five states and plan to publish seven more. We're making the data sets publicly available online so that other researchers can use it to better understand how mass incarceration harms communities and correlates with other measures of community well-being.

 **Doug Henwood**
@DougHenwood

Excellent look at the geography of incarceration in New York State from @PrisonPolicy. Surprisingly, several upstate cities have higher incarceration rates than NYC.



 **OPINION**
Commentary: Report affirms damage done by high incarceration rates
Alice Green
June 26, 2022

Some 30 years ago, a group of incarcerated Black and brown men at New York's Green Haven Correctional Facility, including several who had been at Attica during the 1971 death row protests, were released.

 **MENU**

Upstate NY counties send the most people to state prisons per capita, says new report

© HAYLEY JONES | JUNE 7, 2022 @ 8:19 AM

THE ROANOKE TIMES
EDITORIAL
Editorial: New study unveils the effects of mass incarceration in Virginia
Jul 25, 2022



A little-heralded Virginia legislative yielded insights into which of the commonwealth's communities endure reaching effects of mass incarceration shorthand for the United States other than ad

COVID-19 and beyond: Exposing the public health crisis of mass incarceration

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

We use data and advocacy to push for reforms that minimize the harms to incarcerated people, correctional staff, and their communities during the pandemic — and explain why mass incarceration is always a public health crisis.

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

States of emergency: The failure of prison system responses to COVID-19

In a state-by-state review of how prisons have responded to COVID-19 as of September 2021, we gave 43 states and the federal Bureau of Prisons an “F” grade for their mishandling of the pandemic. We assessed states on 16 criteria — both policies and outcomes — related to population reduction, infection and mortality rates, vaccination efforts, and basic policies to support mental and physical health.

This report was used as tool by journalists and advocates in over a dozen states to hold elected officials accountable for their failure to protect incarcerated people. Along with our other COVID research, this report was also used by the Supreme Court of Hawaii to mandate releases during the pandemic.

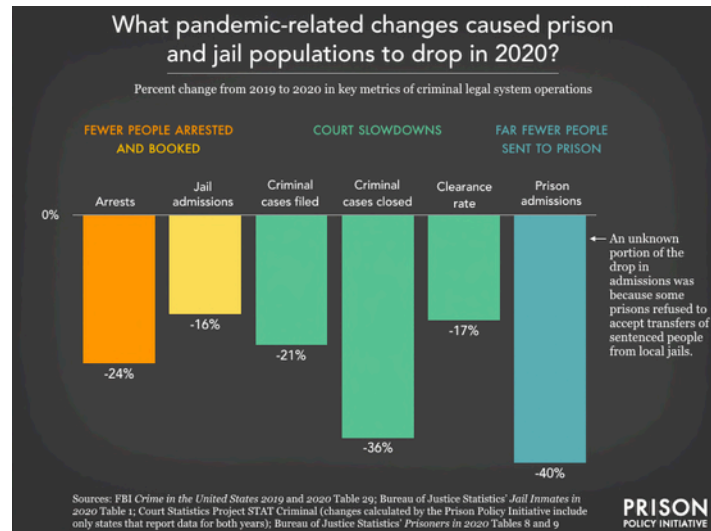


State prisons and local jails appear indifferent to COVID outbreaks, refuse to depopulate dangerous facilities

Throughout the pandemic, we published regular updates on the population fluctuations in prisons and jails. Our February 2022 analysis found that even as Covid variants ripped through correctional facilities, the number of people behind bars was returning to pre-pandemic levels. Early reforms instituted to mitigate COVID-19 have been abandoned, and 28% of jails had higher populations in February 2022 than at the start of the pandemic.

Untangling changes in prisons, jails, probation, and parole in the first year of the pandemic

During the first year of the pandemic, deaths in prison increased by 46%, while 10% fewer people were released. We propelled these tragic findings onto the national stage, so the public would know about the deadly mishandling of the pandemic in prisons. Our research shows that a drop in admissions — not increased releases — drove Covid-related prison and jail population reductions. Without intentional changes, we can expect prison and jail populations to return to their pre-pandemic levels as the gears of the criminal legal system get back up to speed.



Since you asked: What information is available about COVID-19 and vaccinations in prison?

Our December 2021 briefing revealed that prison systems were publishing patchy data about COVID-19, often failing to publish active cases, vaccination progress, or cumulative deaths. In over 40 states we found no evidence that prisons were providing boosters to incarcerated people. In response to our report, a slew of a state media outlets highlighted the issue, and four states started updating their COVID dashboards.

QUARTZ

GUARDED

Only four US states are providing data about inmate vaccinations

No booster updates.

By Annalisa Merelli
Senior reporter based in New York City
Published December 17, 2021

Once again, the US is bracing for a surge in covid-19 cases, with the delta variant still circulating and the omicron one spreading fast. Cases are rising across the country, prompting some states and cities to impose measures such as mask and vaccine mandate.

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12.23.2021 United States

Prisons / Health

Failure to Prioritize Vaccinating Incarcerated People Will Harm Everyone, Again

BY ERIC REINHART

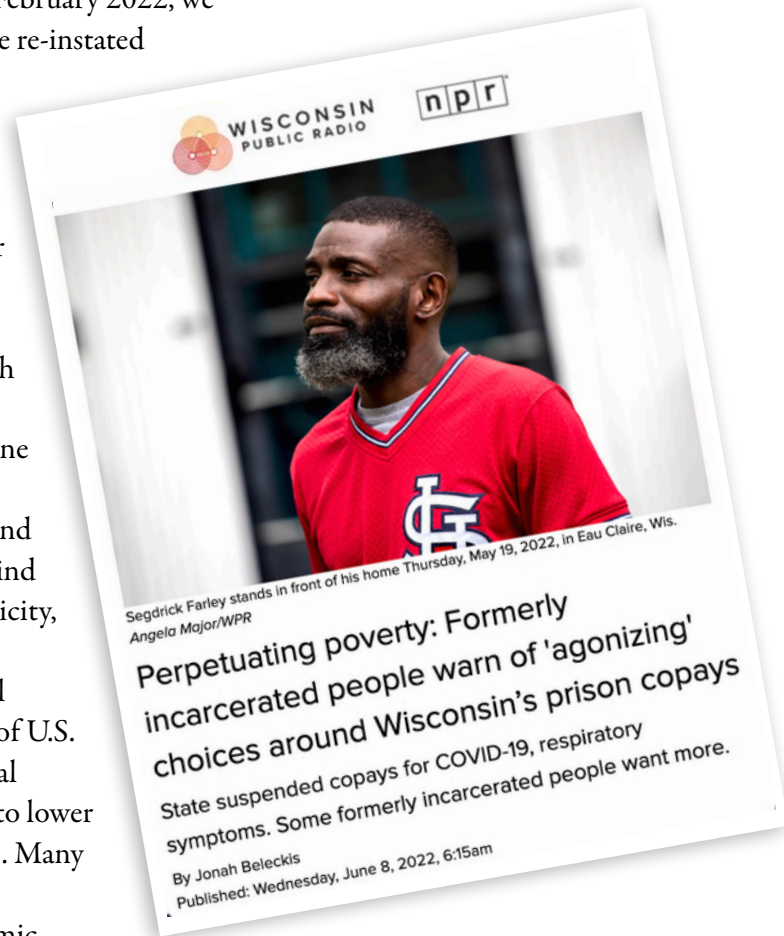
Omicron is coming for America's overcrowded jails and prisons. Prioritizing vaccines for incarcerated people and rolling back our massive prison-industrial complex is good public health for everyone.

COVID looks like it may stay. That means prison medical copays must go.

More than two years into the pandemic, state prisons are still charging incarcerated people unaffordable medical copays. In February 2022, we published 50-state research calling out states that have re-instated medical copays, putting medical care even further out of reach for people behind bars.

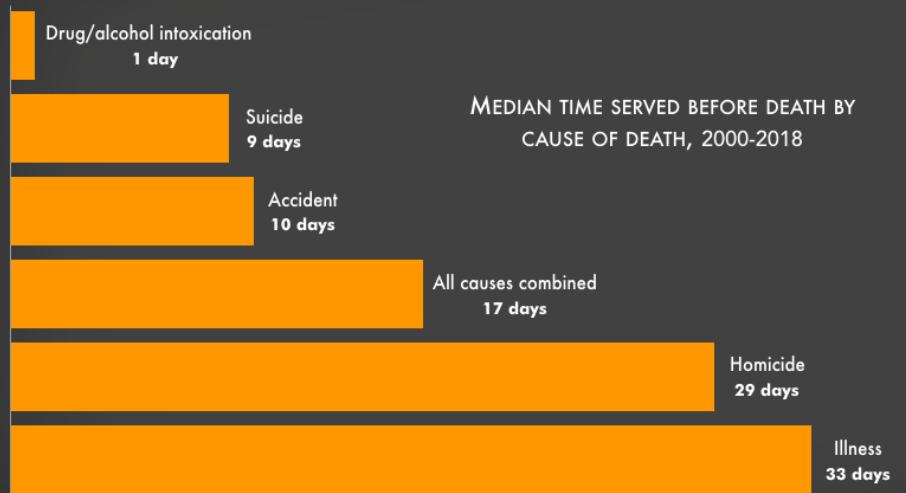
We're also continuing to expose the ways that incarceration destroys people's health — pandemic or no pandemic. Our recent work includes:

- An analysis of new data that shows people with incarcerated loved ones have shorter life expectancies and poorer health. People with one immediate family member who has been incarcerated lose 2.6 years of life expectancy, and people with more than 3 family members behind bars lose 4.6 years, regardless of age, race/ethnicity, or income level.
- Research highlighting the daily environmental injustice experienced by those in prison. 32% of U.S. prisons are located within three miles of federal Superfund sites, proximity to which is linked to lower life expectancy and a litany of terrible illnesses. Many prisons have contaminated air and water.
- An analysis of prison deaths before the pandemic, showing record-setting rates of suicide, homicide, and drug and alcohol-related deaths.



More than half of all jail deaths occur within a month of admission

For people who die from drugs, alcohol, or suicide, even a day or week can mean the difference between life and death.



Sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Mortality in Local Jails, 2000-2018*, Table 6 (percent of deaths within one month) and Table 11 (median time served before death)

Measuring the impact of mass incarceration on women

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

Women's incarceration rates have exploded in recent decades, and has disproportionately been located in local jails. We use data to expose the injustice of their experiences.

Understanding the specific gendered experiences of incarcerated women is key to ending the enormous harms of mass incarceration. Highlights from our work include:

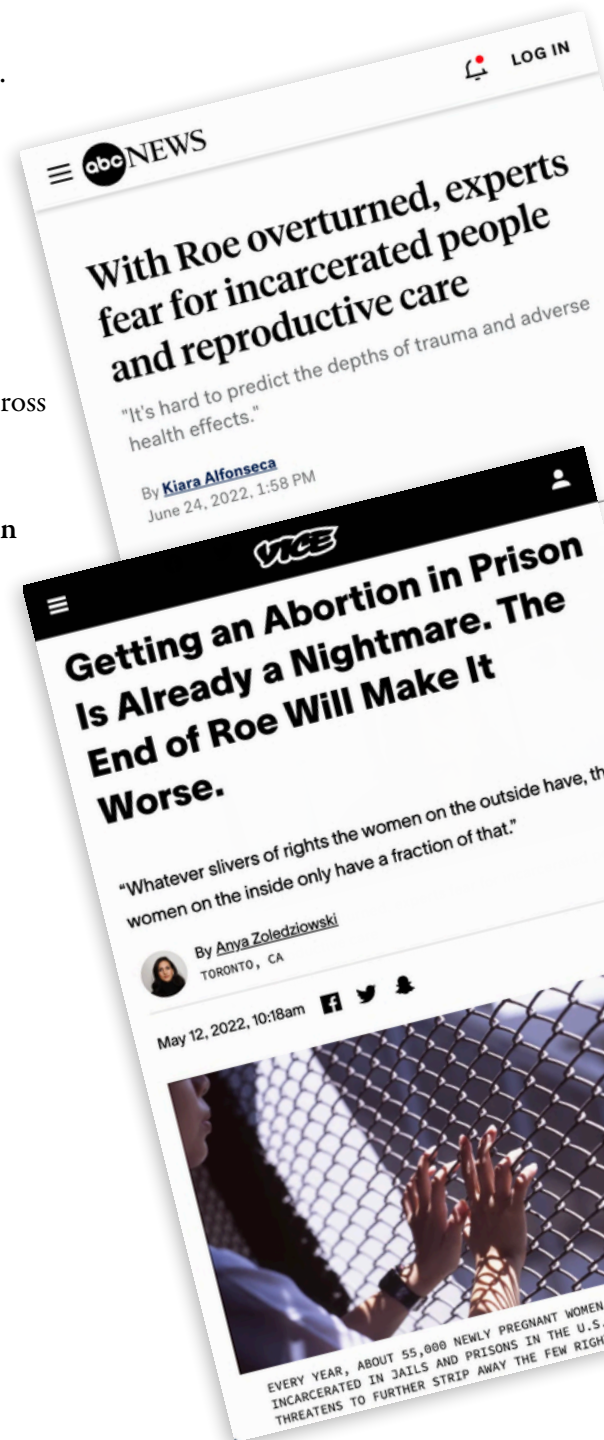
What the end of *Roe v. Wade* will mean for people on probation and parole

In this briefing, we explain why people on probation and parole are especially affected when states outlaw abortion. On any given day, 216,000 women in the affected states are on restrictive forms of community supervision that make it practically impossible to travel across state lines for abortion care.

Recent studies shed light on what reproductive “choice” looks like in prisons and jails

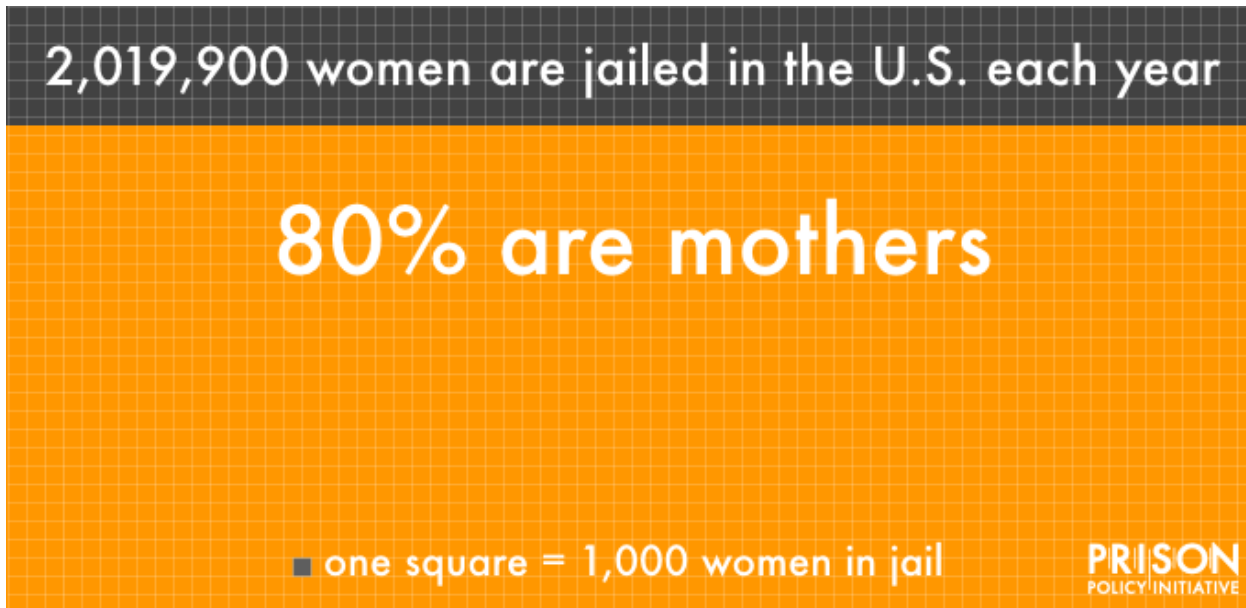
With this briefing, we brought attention to the very limited reproductive choice behind bars even before the court's decision. Abortion and contraception access vary greatly between state prison systems, but our findings were that many incarcerated women were already living in a post-Roe world.

| | Probation | Parole | Total |
|--------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Arkansas | 9,835 | 3,742 | 13,577 |
| Idaho | 4,346 | 781 | 5,127 |
| Kentucky | 14,876 | 2,844 | 17,720 |
| Louisiana | 10,686 | 3,709 | 14,395 |
| Mississippi | 6,470 | 1,190 | 7,660 |
| Missouri | 12,284 | 2,883 | 15,167 |
| North Dakota | 1,558 | 202 | 1,760 |
| Oklahoma | 5,281 | 294 | 5,575 |
| South Dakota | No data | 552 | 552 |
| Tennessee | 16,701 | 1,482 | 18,183 |
| Texas | 98,808 | 11,896 | 110,704 |
| Utah | 3,253 | 463 | 3,716 |
| Wyoming | 1,385 | 125 | 1,510 |
| Total | 185,483 | 30,163 | 215,646 |



Unsupportive environments and limited policies: Pregnancy, postpartum, and birth during incarceration

In this briefing, we find that roughly 58,000 pregnant women enter custody every year, and thousands give birth while incarcerated — but most prisons and jails lack basic policies providing prenatal, birth, or postpartum care. We call attention to this underserved population and discuss recent findings that offer the most detailed picture yet of the challenges of pregnancy behind bars.



Prisons and jails will separate millions of mothers from their children in 2022

People behind bars are not nameless “offenders,” but beloved family members and friends whose presence — and absence — matters. To mark Mother’s Day, we review the most important statistics about the incarceration of mothers. Key data includes: Over half of all women in U.S. prisons are mothers, as are 80% of women in jails.

Rise in jail deaths is especially troubling as jail populations become more rural and more female

Each year, jail stays become increasingly deadly. We explain the recently released mortality data for local jails, showing that more women are dying in local jails, and that rural jails are particularly deadly.

Calling attention to local jails

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

One out of every three people who were behind bars last night was confined in a jail, two out of every three correctional facilities are jails, and almost every person (95%) released from a correctional facility today was released from a jail. We put their stories into the national criminal justice discussion.

Despite the harsh conditions and sprawling impact, jails are often overlooked when it comes to criminal justice reform. We use data-driven advocacy to fight jail expansion projects and push for bail reform. Highlights from our work include:

Smoke and mirrors: A cautionary tale for counties considering a big, costly new jail

A jail architecture firm and local law enforcement tried to sell residents of a small Michigan county on building a new and bigger jail, but their report reads like a lesson in why NOT to build a new jail. In this briefing, we provide analysis on one of the worst jail expansion proposals we've ever seen. Our work with local activists in the county was a success — in October, the new jail was put to a vote and residents rejected the proposal.

Health in Justice Action Lab
@HiJAction

An alarming report about a recent jail expansion in Otsego County, Michigan from @PrisonPolicy. "So why aren't voters convinced of the need for a \$30 million, 120-170 bed jail?"

Safe & Just Michigan
@safeandjustmi

"The worst jail assessment we've ever seen"

Officials in #Otsego Co., #Michigan hired an architectural firm to draft a feasibility study for a new jail. @PrisonPolicy explains why it's misguided & outlines a better plan of action the county. #CJReform

Jail supporters point to "over 1,100 outstanding warrants" as evidence they need a bigger jail. But a closer look at those warrants reveals that few will ever lead to jail time.

Of the "over 1,100 outstanding warrants" cited as evidence that a new jail is needed: 282 are bench warrants that date back to 1986. 43% are from over ten years ago.

Bench warrants are issued by courts, often for failure to appear at hearings, and are meant to bring people back to clear up court matters. Less than one-third (31%) of the bench warrants in this county are related to felonies or violations of personal protection orders. Most are for family court issues unrelated to public safety.

COUNTY = 69
BENCH WARRANT PRINTING

NUMBER OF ITEMS MEETING ABOVE CRITERIA = 282

News-Review

NEWS

Advocacy group criticizes Otsego's failed jail proposal

William T. Perkins The Petoskey News-Review


Published 6:02 a.m. ET Jul. 19, 2021

GAYLORD — A report this month from a nonpartisan prison reform organization took aim at the recently-failed justice complex proposal in Otsego County, calling it a "cautionary tale," and accusing officials of a "smoke and mirrors" approach.

Taking the fight against jail and prison expansion on the offensive
 We explain how a 5-year moratorium on prison and jail construction in Massachusetts could flip the script in the fight against jail and prison expansion nationally. Moratoriums like this allow states to explore reforms that will better address underlying issues and reduce incarceration.

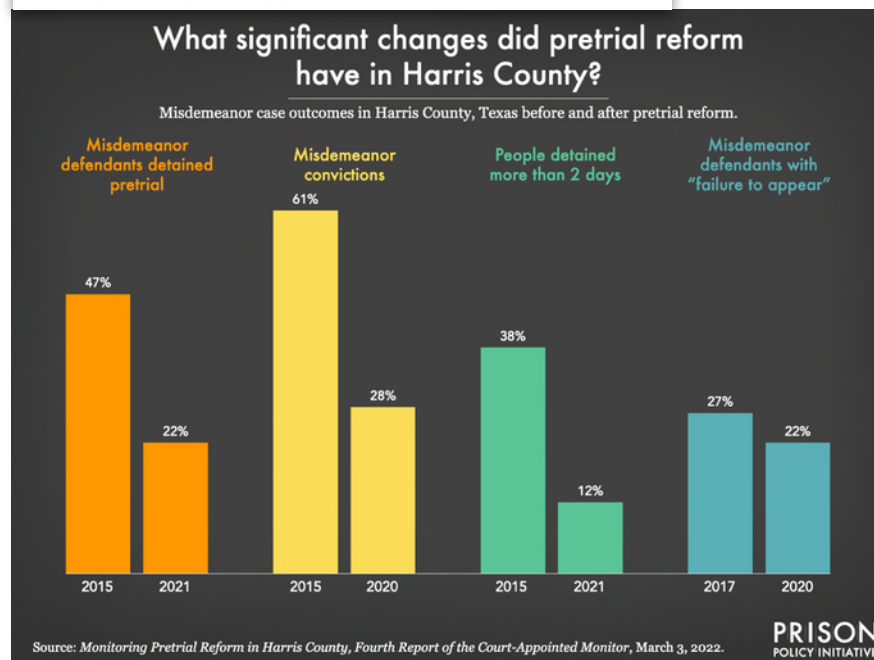
What does successful bail reform look like? To start, look to Harris County, Texas.

We explain new data from Texas that supports what advocates have been saying for years: there's no need to detain so many people pretrial. The numbers show the benefits of ending cash bail; after Harris County stopping holding misdemeanor defendants who couldn't pay bail, there was a 39% reduction in convictions for misdemeanor crimes and a reduction in failures to appear at court.

 **Steven Logan**
 @Steven_j_logan

Bail reform can work. Just look at the data in Houston, Texas.

"Fewer 'failures to appear' and no increase in pretrial arrests for new offenses"



CAROLINA Public Press
 CRIME & JUSTICE

NC counties base jail decisions on controversial consultant work

Recommendations to build bigger jails often come from same firms that land jail design contracts. Consultant methods may stack deck in favor of big investments in construction.

COLORADO SPRINGS
INDY

NO WAY OUT
 El Paso County sees death toll climb in the jail, following a growing nationwide trend

Pam Zubeck May 25, 2022 Updated May 26, 2022

Eleven people have died in custody in El Paso County since January 2020, prompting Sheriff Bill Elder to look for reforms to make the jail a safer place — or release those individuals who shouldn't be jailed in the first place.

Though 11 dead might sound like a small number, consider that on the nation's biggest local jails — New York City's Rikers Island — counted 21 dead in 2020 and 2021. Rikers, though it can hold up to 15,000 inmates, 10 times the capacity of El Paso County's lockup, housed roughly 5,000 to 6,000 during the COVID pandemic years of 2020 and 2021.

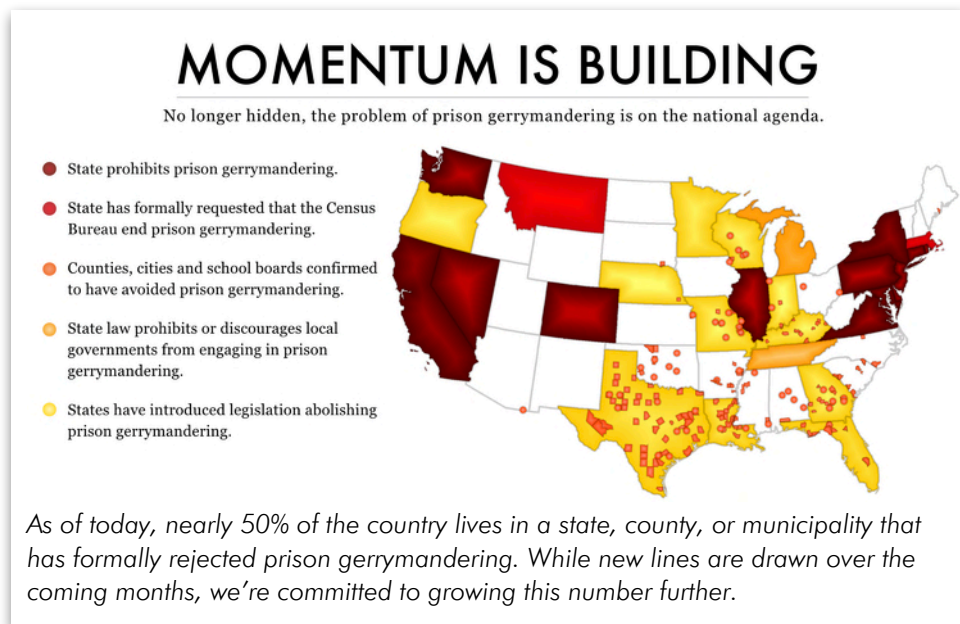
But El Paso County's jail death count is far from unique. From 2000 to 2019, the most recent data available from the Justice Statistics (BJS), 20,413 inmates died in local jails across the country, more than the entire populations of Monument, Springs and Woodland Park, combined.

Protecting our democracy from mass incarceration by ending prison gerrymandering

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

The Census Bureau's practice of counting almost two million incarcerated people where they are imprisoned awards undue political clout to people who live near prisons at the expense of everyone else.

When our work began in 2001, no one knew what prison gerrymandering was, never mind how it distorts our democracy and criminal legal system. Today our work is sparking legislation in states across the country, and making this a key issue for lawmakers, voting and civil rights advocates, researchers, and journalists. As a result, roughly half of the country now lives in a place that has formally rejected prison gerrymandering.



Recent highlights from this year include:

- Our campaign to end prison gerrymandering in the states continues to gain momentum, as we helped **Rhode Island** address prison gerrymandering and **Washington** expanded its reform to include local government districts. Over a dozen states have now ended the practice or taken steps to count some incarcerated people at home.
- We had success drumming up media focus on this under-discussed issue, including dozens of state-based publications, and national publications like *The Washington Post* and *New York Times*.

Fighting to end the financial exploitation of incarcerated people and families

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

Incarcerated people and their families are literally a captive market that private companies — with the collusion of the facilities — are all too eager to exploit.

With detailed research and a keen eye for areas of exploitation, we bring corrupt practices to light — and pressure regulatory bodies to intervene. Highlights from our work include:

Show me the money: Tracking the companies that have a lock on sending funds to incarcerated people

People in prison are increasingly required to pay for basic necessities, but when loved ones on the outside try to send money, they get hit with huge fees — up to \$7.45 on a \$20 deposit. In this briefing, we expose the private companies profiting from this exploitative practice.

Insufficient funds: How prison and jail “release cards” perpetuate the cycle of poverty

We’re shining light on a disturbing new trend: Prisons are disbursing the tiny amounts of money people are owed when they’re released via prepaid debit cards. The cards, managed by companies that profit off incarceration, are riddled with fees for everything from checking your balance to making a purchase. Rather than helping people rebuild their lives post-release, prisons partner with private companies to sap people of the little money they have.

Bloomberg Law

Inmate Families Face Cash-Transfer Fees ‘Just to Stay Connected’

BY EVAN WEINBERGER

Jan. 11, 2022, 6:00 AM



- Market for wiring money into prisons dominated by three firms
- Costs borne largely by people already struggling financially

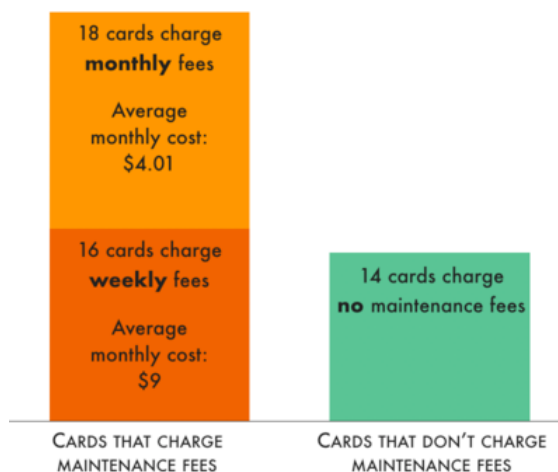
Families transferring funds to relatives in state prisons have no choice but to pay fees that can take more than a third of their money off the top—an expense that lingers even as the cost of sending money plummets everywhere else.

The average fee to wire \$20 to an incarcerated person in a state-run prison nationwide is 19% (\$3.80), but ranges from 5% (\$1) in some states to 37% (\$7.40) in others, according to a recent Prison Policy Initiative study. Almost all of the money goes to the three private companies that monopolize the market.

“There really hasn’t been any organized pushback to this,” said Juliene James, the vice president for criminal justice at Arnold Ventures, a philanthropic investment fund.

“Maybe there were costs historically,” she says, “but we’re living in the age of Venmo.”

Maintenance fees quickly drain value from release cards



We're making progress on our long-standing campaign to lower the price of prison and jail phone calls

At the state level, we worked with regulators in California to bring the cost of calls down to 7 cents per minute from a high of almost \$1. Federally, we filed comments calling on the FCC to bring the cost of jail phone down even further. The most recent regulations from the Federal Communications Commission capped out-of-state prison calls at 14 cents per minute, and some out-of-state jail phone calls at 16 cents per minute. That's progress, but it isn't good enough.

Proposed slowdown of the mail would disproportionately hit incarcerated mailers

Incarcerated people rely heavily on mail services to communicate with the outside world, including loved ones and legal support. When the Postal Service announced it was planned to slow down services, we filed comments with the Postal Regulatory Commission explaining the disparate impact on incarcerated people.

PacificSun

TRENDING: Marin City advocates raise drinking water

Jail Profits, In

Marin County refuse inmates and their families

By Nikki Silverstein | May 18, 2022



The Marin County Jail reaps an inmate calls home or buys from the commissary.

The practice of jails benefit necessities disproportionally color. Families often struggle income of the incarcerated mark up the prices, it adds

A10 Editorial Opinion

BOSTONGLOBE.COM/OPINION

THE BOSTON GLOBE

FRIDAY, MAY 20, 2022

EDITORIAL

A lifeline, not a frill: Make jail phone calls free

The state's highest court made clear this week that there's nothing to prevent county sheriffs from continuing to charge often usurious rates for the phone calls that provide inmates their lifeline to the outside world — to family, friends, and even lawyers.

That decision, by the Supreme Judicial Court, ups the ante on legislative efforts to see that this most vital service, critical to any inmate's reentry into the community, is treated with the seriousness it deserves — and, like food and clothing, is provided free of charge.

Under the current system, county sheriffs and the state Department of Correction are contracted with a private telecom provider — Securus is the firm of choice for both the state and all but two Massachusetts counties — but the rates are actually paid by those on the receiving end of the phone calls. So it's most often families who bear the burden of the calls, which average about 14 cents a minute.

However, as recently as 2018, prisoners housed in Bristol County — the subject of the lawsuit before the SJC — were charged as much as \$3.16 for the first minute and 16 cents a minute thereafter.

The suit — filed against Bristol County Sheriff Thomas Hodgson by a collection of former inmates, several attorneys (who also are forced to pay those phone bills), and a family member of a former inmate, represented by Prisoners' Legal Services — charged that the sheriff had no authority under state law to "extract unlawful fees" in the form of those "inflated" phone charges. An amicus brief filed by the American

Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts called the agreements and the commissions they generated for the sheriff's office "legalized kickbacks."

In 2009, when legislation was passed completing the state's takeover of county government, the duties and responsibilities of those county sheriffs were clarified, including the right to profit from those inmate phone calls.

"Had the Legislature intended to put an end to the sheriff's practice of collecting inmate telephone revenues, it could have done so," Chief Justice Kimberly Budd wrote in the opinion, issued Tuesday. Instead, the 2009 statute "expressly

In prison, phone calls are as vital as food and clothes. Sherrifs shouldn't be using call fees as a means to balance their budgets.

provides that the sheriff may continue to retain inmate telephone revenues even after the transfer of the sheriff's office to the Commonwealth."

That might have been just fine with lawmakers back in 2009, but the COVID-19 pandemic, which curtailed in-person prison visits, made clear how important those lines of communication were. The Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association responded last summer by agreeing to allow 10 free minutes of calling time per week to each inmate and to assure a top rate of 14 cents per minute.

At the same time, Connecticut became the first state in the nation to make all inmate calls free. Around the country, localities like New York City implemented free calls in 2019, and San Diego County began offering free calls (limited to 15 minutes each) last summer.

The Massachusetts House, as part of its fiscal 2023 budget, mandates that the state Department of Correction, county sheriffs, and the Department of Youth Services all provide phone services free of charge. House budget analysts found that calls, video, and electronic communications currently cost those incarcerated and their families some \$14.4 million a year.

The House proposes setting up a Communications Access Trust fund with initial funding of \$20 million to cover the potential revenue loss to DOC and the sheriffs.

Next week the Senate is scheduled to debate its budget plan, and Senator Cynthia Creem has filed an amendment that would also offer free calling from state and county prisons beginning July 1, 2023. The amendment does not use the trust fund device or propose additional funding, but its passage would certainly provide momentum as the two budgets move into the inevitable conference committee for negotiating differences between their spending priorities.

Onerous fees for a basic necessity like communications do nothing to protect public safety, and in fact make rebuilding life after prison harder if they cause inmates' social and family connections to fray. The fees are simply an unnecessary and counterproductive burden, one that should be lifted by lawmakers this year.

Federal Communications Commission

Before the Federal Communications Commission Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of Rates for Interstate Inmate Calling Services

WC Docket No. 12-375

THIRD REPORT AND ORDER ON RECONSIDERATION, AND FIFTH FURTHER NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING

Adopted: May 20, 2021

Comment Date: 30 days after date of publication in the Federal Register

Reply Comment Date: 60 days after date of publication in the Federal Register

By the Commission: Acting Chairwoman Rosenworcel and Commissioners Carr and Starks issuing separate statements.

Released: May 24, 2021

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Calling on the FCC to regulate video-calling technology in prisons and jails

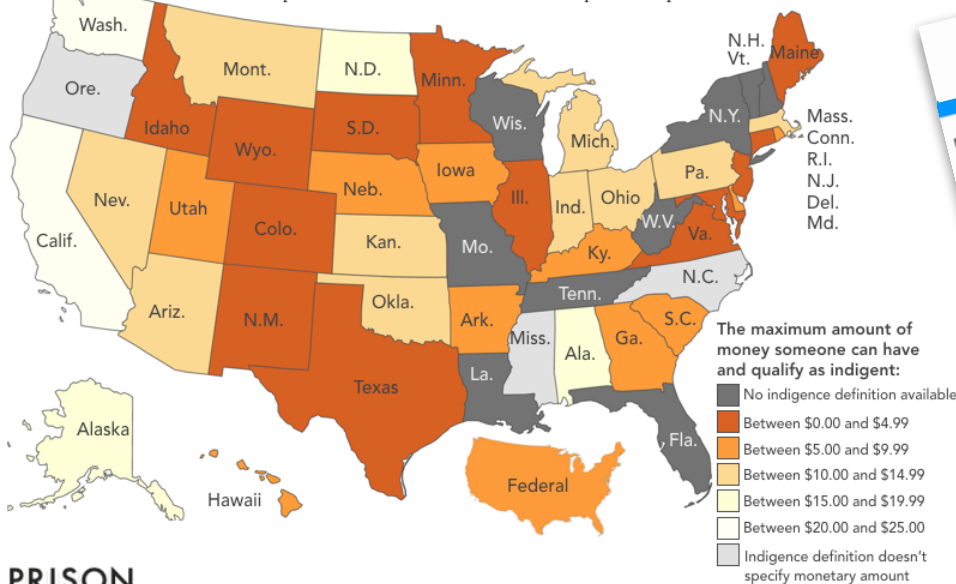
Bringing video-calling technology to jails seems like a great idea, but too often jails collude with telecom companies to eliminate human contact by replacing in-person visits with expensive, low-quality video chats. We present comments to the FCC with the steps that the agency should take to crack down on high prices and unfair practices in the prison and jail video-calling market.

For the poorest people in prison, it's a struggle to access even basic necessities

Who qualifies as "poor enough" to be considered indigent in prison? Our 50-state research on indigency policies in state prisons, and finds that most states have strict definitions and — for those who do qualify — inadequate services for people who can't afford basic necessities like toilet paper or stamps.

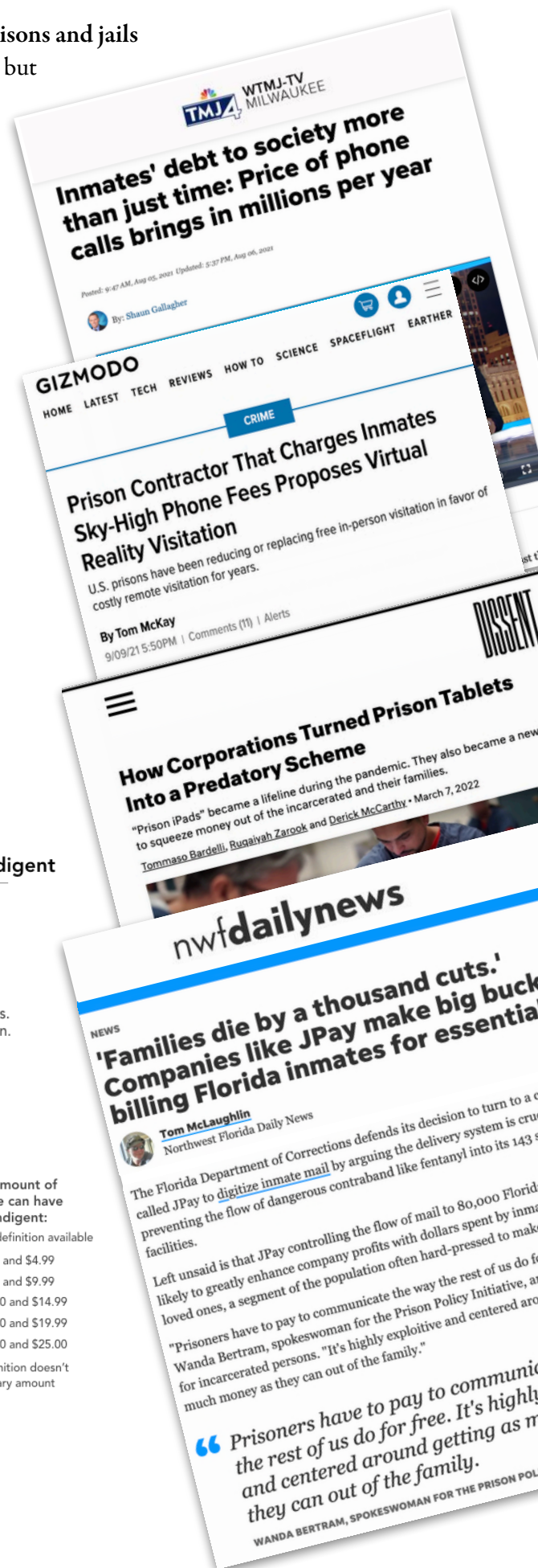
Thirteen states require people to have less than \$5 to qualify as indigent

Even the most "generous" states require poor incarcerated people to have less than \$25 before they will provide them with essential items like shampoo and soap.



PRISON
POLICY INITIATIVE

Data collected by Prison Policy Initiative from departments of corrections.



Building a stronger justice reform movement

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

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

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

A new toolkit for advocates working to end mass incarceration

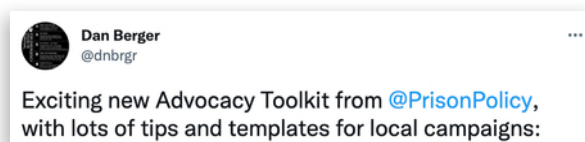
Our new Advocacy Toolkit is a collection of guides and training materials that advocates can use to strengthen their campaigns to end mass incarceration. It provides skills-based guides on accessing public records, securing and organizing data, crafting persuasive narratives, and creating impactful visuals. It also includes issue-based guides on protecting in-person visits in prisons and jails, opposing jail expansion, and ending prison gerrymandering.

Winnable criminal justice reforms in 2022

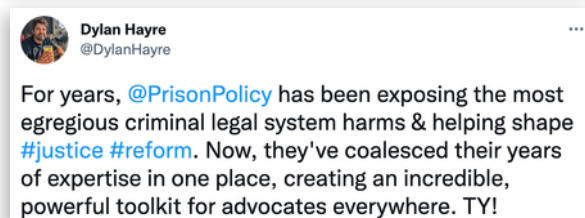
We list high-impact policy ideas for state legislators and advocates who are looking to reform their criminal legal system this year without making it bigger. We sent this report to dozens of state-based advocacy groups and over 600 legislators who have a track record of winning reform — generating follow-up conversations with legislators from across the country about what reforms they could advance in their state.

Nine ways that states can provide better public defense

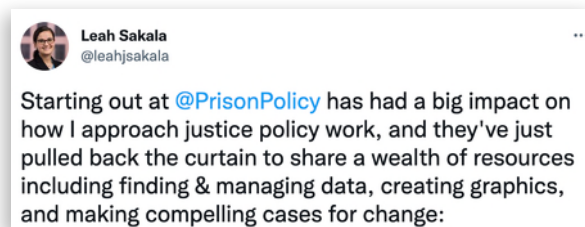
One of the many reasons mass incarceration persists is because people too poor to afford their own lawyers are denied meaningful representation in court. In this briefing, we outline 9 common problems that plague public defense systems nationwide — so that advocates can assess their system and have solutions ready.



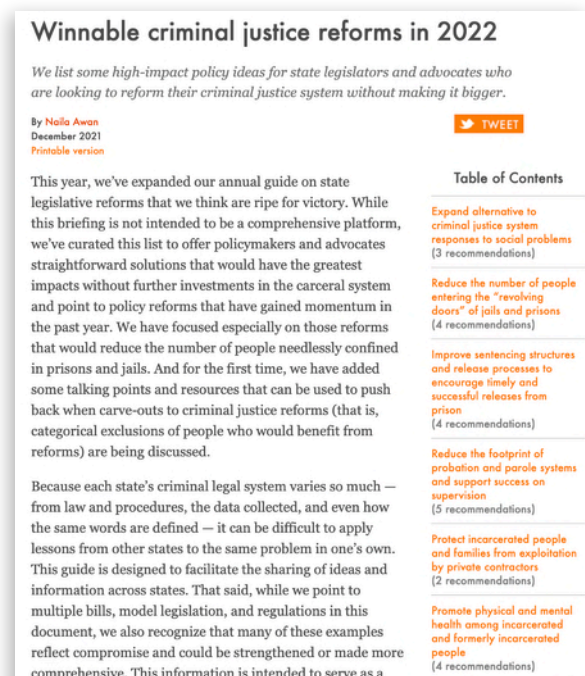
Dan Berger @dnbrgr
Exciting new Advocacy Toolkit from @PrisonPolicy, with lots of tips and templates for local campaigns:



Dylan Hayre @DylanHayre
For years, @PrisonPolicy has been exposing the most egregious criminal legal system harms & helping shape #justice #reform. Now, they've coalesced their years of expertise in one place, creating an incredible, powerful toolkit for advocates everywhere. TY!



Leah Sakala @leahjsakala
Starting out at @PrisonPolicy has had a big impact on how I approach justice policy work, and they've just pulled back the curtain to share a wealth of resources including finding & managing data, creating graphics, and making compelling cases for change:



Winnable criminal justice reforms in 2022

We list some high-impact policy ideas for state legislators and advocates who are looking to reform their criminal justice system without making it bigger.

By Nalia Awan
December 2021
[Printable version](#)

[TWEET](#)

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- Expand alternative to criminal justice system responses to social problems (3 recommendations)
- Reduce the number of people entering the "revolving doors" of jails and prisons (4 recommendations)
- Improve sentencing structures and release processes to encourage timely and successful releases from prison (4 recommendations)
- Reduce the footprint of probation and parole systems and support success on supervision (5 recommendations)
- Protect incarcerated people and families from exploitation by private contractors (2 recommendations)
- Promote physical and mental health among incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people (4 recommendations)

Because each state's criminal legal system varies so much — from law and procedures, the data collected, and even how the same words are defined — it can be difficult to apply lessons from other states to the same problem in one's own. This guide is designed to facilitate the sharing of ideas and information across states. That said, while we point to multiple bills, model legislation, and regulations in this document, we also recognize that many of these examples reflect compromise and could be strengthened or made more comprehensive. This information is intended to serve as a

Building exits off the highway to mass incarceration: Diversion programs explained

Diversion programs aren't all created equal. In this report we explain the various types of diversion programs: pre-arrest, pre-charge, pretrial, post-trial, and community-based programs that don't involve the police. We compare and contrast the different programs, showing how the best programs get people off the highway to incarceration as early as possible, long before jail time or arrest.

Research Library

Our mission is to empower activists, journalists, and policymakers to shape effective criminal justice policy, so we go beyond our original reports and analyses to curate a database of virtually all the empirical criminal justice research available online. Our searchable Research Library contains 3,897 entries on issues ranging from racial disparities to sentencing policy to recidivism and reentry. In the last year, we've added 263 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.



Supporting our work

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

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

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

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

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

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

*“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!”*

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

*- Micky Duxbury, **donor since 2022***

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

*- Kyle Taylor Lucas, **donor since 2020***

*- Jo Kreiter
Donor since 2018*

Prison Policy Initiative budget report for 2021-2022 year

Income

Grants & Gifts

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Large Foundations* | \$1,250,500 |
| Individual Donors and small foundations | \$681,557 |

Earned Revenue

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Honoraria and consulting fees | \$7,479 |
| Interest | \$17,284 |

Total Income **\$1,956,820**

Expenses

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Salaries and benefits, including fringe | \$1,467,226 |
| Consultants | \$25,315 |
| Computers | \$5,417 |
| Rent | \$13,141 |
| Supplies | \$6,395 |
| Internet hosting, telephone, etc. | \$7,104 |
| Printing and postage | \$4,691 |
| Travel | \$6,153 |
| Other (Accounting, Bank charges, insurance, Dues, Taxes, Advertising, Research tools, FOIA fees, Staff development) | \$24,475 |

Total Expenses **\$1,559,917**

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