



All of Us or None

Inaugural Issue, Fall 2012

All of Us or None is an organizing movement started by people who have been in prison in order to challenge the pervasive discrimination that formerly incarcerated people, people in prison, and our family members face. Our goal is to strengthen the voices of people most affected by mass incarceration and the growth of the prison-industrial complex. Through our grassroots organizing, we will build a powerful political movement to win full restoration of our human and civil rights.

The Development of All of Us or None

In November of 2002, Dorsey Nunn, then co-director of (Legal Services for Prisoners with Children (LSPC) in San Francisco) wrote a document called “Save Our Selves.” He shared it with many people, asking for comments and modifications. Many organizers who had been in prison were already excited by the idea of uniting with other former prisoners and people inside to build political power for our communities. “Save Our Selves” proposed a way to build a new civil rights movement to eliminate the many forms of discrimination faced by people with felony convictions.

“Save Our Selves” was renamed All of Us Or None to honor Nate Harrington, a San Francisco man who had been in prison, earned his GED inside prison, and went on to become a lawyer and director of Prison Legal Services in the San Francisco County Jail. When Nate died in 1999, the law library in the jail was named after him, and a memorial to him was created in the lobby. Some of his favorite things were in the memorial case: a Snickers bar, the book Wretched of the Earth by Franz Fanon, and the Poem “All of Us Or None,” written by Bertolt Brecht.

Several former prisoners in California had been discussing the need for a statewide strategy session. We wanted to develop effective ways to organize so we could change criminal “justice” policy, support each others’ work, and fight to eradicate all the obstacles facing people coming out of prison. We specifically included young people who had been in juvenile hall or California Youth Authority, so we could address how early imprisonment impacts young peoples’ lives and future. We also prioritized the participation of women, and provided childcare and eldercare stipends. The Planning Committee for this strategy session included staff members from LSPC and representatives from the Center of Young Women’s Development and Barrios Unidos. The strategy session happened on March 14-16th, 2003 in Oakland, CA with over forty former prisoners participating – one-third young people under the age of 23, one-half women, and 90% people of color. We made agreements to organize statewide across racial,

class, gender, age and geographic boundaries.

Three weeks a later, we organized a national planning meeting just prior to the Critical Resistance South conference in New Orleans, April 4-6, 2003. We convened over 50 former prisoners from 16 states to discuss a national strategy to organize people who had been in prison to fight for full restoration of our rights. Collectively we agreed to form All of Us or None, to launch an organizing drive to mobilize former prisoners, felons, and our

family members, and to reach into the prisons to include brothers

and sisters inside. Legal Services for Prisoners with Children agreed to coordinate the effort, and All of Us or None was born.

Since its inception, All of Us or None has developed campaigns in California to build political power and strengthen the voices of people and communities affected by a racist criminal justice system. The current campaigns include:

- Ban The Box, the nationally-recognized effort to eliminate all questions relating to a person’s arrest or conviction history from all applications – for housing, employment, benefits, etc.;
- Voting Rights for All, regardless of conviction status or whether people are on any type of supervision;



All of Us or None Members - New Orleans 2003

Honoring our Elders A Tribute to Elder Freeman



Ronald “Elder” Freeman

Not too many people can be defined in words or even placed in a particular category. This is equally, if not more than, true for Ronald “Elder” Freeman whose unblemished reputation is larger than life, overwhelming the space of many different capacities. He exemplified courage and tenacity as a youth growing up in the urban dwelling of South Central Los Angeles.

In 1967 when the country was on the brink of revolutionary change and racial tension threatened to envelope, not only the black community, but radical consciousness as a whole, the young man known as Ronald Freeman took a stand as a freedom fighter and committed his urban proficiency to the Black Panther Party. His insatiable appetite to rest the essence of power truly in the hands of the people gained him the rank of Field Secretary, where he was charged with the duty of overseeing everything from food programs to supervising staff.

While Ronald Freeman was working towards implementing and advancing a people’s agenda towards self-determination, a covert and illegal FBI Counter Intelligence Program, better known as COINTELPRO, sought to squash all resistance towards liberation by assassinating, incarcerating, and neutralizing radical political organizations and its leaders. Nonetheless, from within the “Belly of The Beast” (San Quentin State Prison), Ronald continued to lead as the Rules Director for the Party directing activities, functions, and formulated programs for young men, while counseling youth.

Upon his release from captivity, he embarked on pursuit of higher learning and spiritual enrichment. Elder earned his degree in General Education, with emphases on Marketing and Economics. He further enriched his repertoire by becoming an ordained Minister for the African Orthodox


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ALL OF US OR NONE
C/O LEGAL SERVICES FOR PRISONERS
WITH CHILDREN
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Self-Determination Pledge



As members of All of Us or None, we pledge:

To demand the right to speak in our own voices

To treat each other with respect and not allow differences to divide us

To accept responsibility for any acts that may have caused harm to our families, our communities or ourselves.

To fight all forms of discrimination

To help build the economic stability of formerly-incarcerated people

To claim and take care of our own children and our families

To support community struggles to stop using prisons as the answer to social problems.

To play an active role in making our communities safe for everyone.

SECTION EDITORS NEEDED!

We’re looking for members to become section editors in the following areas:

- FEATURE ARTICLES
- CHAPTER UPDATES & CALENDAR
- YOUTH
- ADS
- LETTERS FROM INCARCERATED COMMUNITIES
- PHOTOS
- COORDINATING EDITOR

If you’re interested in any of these positions, please call: 415-255-7036 ext. 337

LEAVE A MESSAGE WITH YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION
Someone will return your call within 24 hours.

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS NEWSLETTER. IT’S BEEN A LONG TIME COMING AND WE HOPE TO CONTINUE RECEIVING THE SUPPORT FROM MEMBERS ACROSS THE NATION.

We would also like to thank Toshio Meronek and Urszula Frydman who provided valuable technical assistance.

A special thank you is extended to our comrade and professional photographer Scott Braley whose photographs appear throughout this publication

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT ARTICLES, PHOTOS, ADS OR WANT TO SUPPORT THIS PUBLICATION WRITE TO:
LSPC/All of Us or None
1540 Market St. Ste. 490
San Francisco, CA 94102

All of Us or None at The Nation Inside

All of Us or None organizers recently attended the 2012 Allied Media Conference (AMC) held in Detroit, which bills itself as “participatory media to transform ourselves and our world.” A diverse crowd of around 2000 organizers, media makers and artists (including many youth, elders, queer and disabled participants) gathered to share communication strategies and technologies for social justice work.

Workshops emphasized solution-oriented strategies, creative approaches and collaboration. Held in Detroit since 2007, the AMC sees Detroit organizations like the Detroit Digital Justice Coalition and Detroit Summer “as a source of innovative, collaborative, low-resource solutions.” Detroit tours included the Eco Justice Media tour, the Earthworks Urban Farm, and a Sound Conservancy Music Tour.

All of Us or None members participated in The Nation Inside (TNI), a track at the AMC for organizers fighting against the devastating impact of mass incarceration in our communities. TNI participants met for a one-day pre-conference before the AMC began, to network with and learn from each other. The following are comments on the conference from All of Us or None members Linda Armstrong, Fanya Baruti, Manuel La Fontaine, Denise Mewbourne and Tahtanerriah “Tahti” Sessoms.

Manuel: For me, it was a great honor and pleasure to finally hang out with my brother Yusef Shakur, a formerly-incarcerated person, who has been organizing in Detroit since his release. I was also impressed by a pair of African men calling themselves MUGABEE, or Men Under Guidance Acting Before Early Extinction, who opened up the first evening. They took us back to ancient days when storytelling was the medium of communication among indigenous communities of the world. I look forward to incorporating some of their techniques into my organizing and personal life.

Fanya: The Nation Inside: Strategy Session (closing session) was a highlight. It gave me more ideas on how we can expand our activism by using media in various ways to allow our campaigns and the voices of prisoners to be heard, and how important it is to interact with other organizations doing similar work to help strengthen our voices as one.

Denise: One of the greatest moments for me was participating in a radio show with other All of Us or None members, broadcast to Detroit through the micro-power station set up in the main conference center. All of Us or None member Steve Huerta from San Antonio jumped in like he’d been doing it for years and made an amazing radio host!

Tahti: I liked the AMC as a whole better than The Nation Inside, because so many youth-led groups were there. The AMC also had much better trans/gay/lesbian representation, too.

Fanya: In terms of new connections, I was excited to meet Cory Fischer-Hoffman. She interviewed most of the AOUON members concerning Ban the Box and created a PSA. She did a wonderful job and I think we should adapt it. I love radio and making PSA’s, so it was great to meet someone like Cory who gets busy and comes through.

Linda: Nick Szuberia from Thousand Kites gave us free video cameras, and told us how to use them. It doesn’t get better than that!

Manuel: I was happy to connect with folks from Detroit Summer, which is a multi-racial, inter-generational grassroots organization working to transform Detroit through youth leadership, creativity and collective action. I was amazed at how their youth were able to express themselves and organize.

Tahti: I was impressed with the Detroit Summer boys too, and also with some of the youth organizers working with Yusef. It was great to be with youth and adults all trying to work together on the same things.

Denise: In addition to all the great connections, I really appreciated the media strategies and technologies we learned about. The Between the Bars website, a blogging platform for incarcerated people, seems to have a lot of potential for our work.

Fanya: The video footage element of YouTube and Face book, along with PSA’s and Twitter, really interested me more than it did before. On a local and national level, I desire us to begin using the tools available that cost nothing but a little time and effort, to help us further our campaigns and share our work

with activists nationally and abroad. They may want to duplicate what we push out to achieve, such as Ban the Box.

Linda: We could get our own radio station in a year. That would really impact how the public has been brainwashed all these years. They don’t know many of us have made changes to better our lives. It’s time to stop stereotyping people with felony convictions!

Telling our stories is a powerful strategy. If we can put them on the internet it would be one of the best ways to let people know what is really going on behind bars, after release, with discrimination in jobs, etc. Let the people know that we are trying to right a wrong. Get in touch with the community and see how they really feel about what their families and friends are going through. Stop the cops from using scare tactics. It’s a lot!!!

Tahti: I’m very excited about the time we put into moving forward with a newsletter at the conference, because I think a newsletter can really help grow the movement by reaching a broader audience. I’m also excited about the thousand kites’ website as a place for our campaigns to get greater exposure.

Manuel: Some things could have been done better to improve the participation of folks at both The Nation Inside and Allied Media Conference, including those who were not invited. TNI did not meaningfully invite anyone from the community of Detroit, and this is a common practice of many folks doing good work, but out of touch with the reality and people on the ground in areas where conferences are held.

There could have been better representation from the “immigration”/undocumented communities at TNI. We have to be intentional in making these connections, since conventional think tanks are consistently creating strategies that pit “criminal” and “immigration” communities against each other, undermining our individual and collective efforts. TNI must meaningfully incorporate women in their leadership and overall organizational infrastructure. Otherwise, they will be less effective in reaching out to folks inside, and their loved ones and supporters outside.

I learned more about campaigns waged by people from different communities fighting against ICE in the US, in particular the struggle against the proliferation of private prisons. There needs to be a more comprehensive analysis of the Prison Industrial Complex, and a need to develop more holistic framing and messaging around the historical prisoner-resistance struggles by those fighting for “immigration” rights. All of Us or None has to develop stronger relationships with the “immigration” communities, and this needs to be incorporated in our leadership development curriculum.

Although the AMC was extremely diverse, in the future there should be a “track” (workshop series) dedicated to emotional defensiveness and relationship skill building. We won’t achieve complete freedom and liberation until we have serious dialogues across oppressed communities around issues of harm, healing, and privilege.

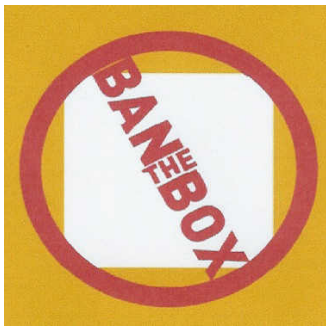
Linda: I think that it would have been better if they had a place for us to meet and fellowship with the Lord. Hearing the Word of God spoken is very special to me. We need to take time and give thanks to God for bringing us together as one voice for the same cause. Mountains get moved much faster when God is involved.

Denise: The Nation Inside really needs to have a more diverse team of facilitators that includes women and people of color. More strategizing about framing communications to combat the criminalization of poor people that results in mass incarceration would be great. Some time spent exploring a common language would also have been useful.

Tahti: Like I said, The Nation Inside really needs to have a lot more youth involved. I would also have like to have seen a lot more planning and less discussing. Objectives were talked about but were not really met. People should leave the conference with some things to do!

Linda: It was a delight to find so many other groups and organizations out fighting for a better Justice System. People from all over are finally coming together for one common cause, and that is the VOICE OF THE PEOPLE MUST BE HEARD!!! If we all stay in communication with each other we become so strong we can move these mountains.

Ban the Box Movement Sweeps the Country



Since 2004, All of Us or None has campaigned to BAN THE BOX on applications for jobs, housing, public benefits, bank loans, insurance, and student loans. Most of us know what box we’re talking about: that question “Have you been arrested?” or “Have you been convicted by a court?” or “Do you have any felony convictions?”

This question represents structural discrimination because a whole system of discrimination has built up based on arrests, convictions, and incarceration. This discrimination is a mask for race discrimination because the majority of people being targeted for arrest and imprisonment in the U.S. today are people of color, in numbers far exceeding their proportion of our population. It’s also a form of discrimination that is widespread: recent research shows that 1 in 4 adults in the U.S. have past arrest or conviction records. The All of Us or None campaign to BAN THE BOX moves us from talk to action to solve this problem!

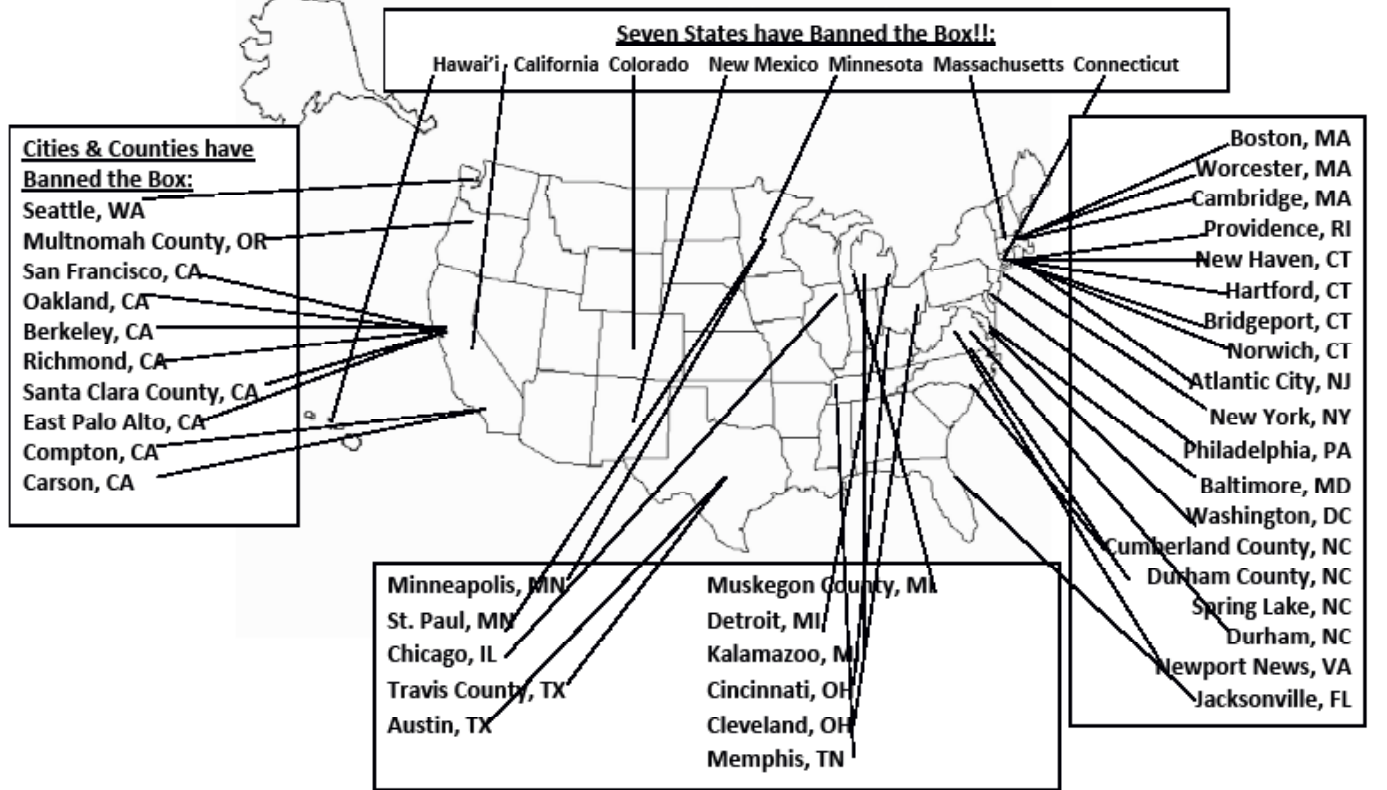
Our BAN THE BOX campaign promotes Fair Hiring policies including these basic changes:

1. Limit background checks to jobs requiring unsupervised contact with finances or vulnerable populations (youth, elderly, or disabled people), or where laws already require background checks (law enforcement, fire, probation, schools.)
2. State whether a background check is required on the initial job announcement, along with a statement explaining that only convictions directly related to job responsibilities will be considered.
3. Consider only convictions substantially related to job responsibilities, in accordance with federal law.
4. Remove the question about arrest and conviction history from the initial job application.
5. Include a non-discrimination statement on the application that specifies protections against discrimination based on arrest, conviction, or incarceration history.
6. Remove any conviction history questionnaire from the process. If a background check will be required for a particular job, the employer should rely on information provided in the back-

ground report rather requiring a separate self-disclosure. The applicant should be given a copy of the background report and the opportunity to correct it and explain any job-related convictions.

7. Delay any background checks until finalist applicants have been found to meet minimum qualifications for the job. Preferably, delay any background check until the finalist candidate has

power locally, by mobilizing our communities. We have won Ban the Box reforms in over 35 cities and counties, and six states (Hawaii, Minnesota, New Mexico, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and California). In San Francisco, soon we’ll introduce amendments to the City Code that will protect formerly-convicted or –incarcerated people from discrimination by all public and private employ-

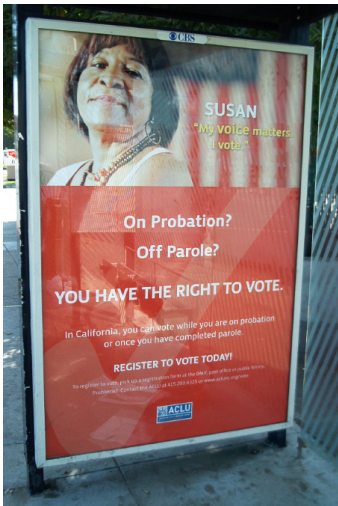


been selected and extended an offer of employment, conditional on the outcome of the background check.

8. If a finalist applicant is rejected because of a job-related conviction, that person should be given a copy of the background check used in the decision. The applicant should be given the opportunity to correct the background information and to submit additional evidence of rehabilitation.

The campaign to BAN THE BOX came straight from us – the people who have been facing this problem for years. We brought our demands to public employment in cities and counties first because this is where we can show our

Voter Registration and YOU



well as those residing in residential treatment centers. We went on to register our brothers and sisters in East Palo Alto, at drug and residential centers, and local events such as the famous Collard Greens Festival. In Oakland we repeated the process of utilizing local events, like the Silence the Violence collaboration, and drug rehabilitation centers, where we educated and helped to register our people.

As formerly-incarcerated people, we recognize the overwhelming challenge of becoming

disengaged in civic participation because of discrimination practices. There are even those of us who have never voted due to being incarcerated at such a young age, and losing faith in the entire political system as a whole. Nonetheless, we are determined to turn up the volume and assure that the voices of formerly incarcerated people, and our families, and our communities be heard. There are two very important issues on the ballot; Proposition 34 “Death Penalty Repeal, Initiative Statute”, and Proposition 36 “Three Strikes Law, Sentencing for Repeat Felony Offenders, Initiative Statute”. These two initiatives are addressing laws that have had a devastating impact on our community. By becoming involved and exercising your right to be heard, we can bring hope to many families, and give everyone an opportunity to let their voice be heard.

To our sisters and brothers throughout this nation: we are many out there, but few exercising our collective power to demand to be treated as human beings with meaningful voices. To all those would be/ could be voters: we are not saying how you should vote. The important thing is that you vote. When you do so, you join all people who fought, died and continue to fight for the opportunity to impact future generations.

“When society no longer accepts the discrimination based on formerly incarcerated people it will come to an end. If we want it to change, we have to make it change; it’s not going to change by itself”.

Linda & Vonya

Riverside Chapter, All of Us or None

BAY AREA

All of Us or None-Bay Area has been active since our founding in 2003. During this last year:

- We supported people on hungerstrike in California prisons. During the summer of 2011, over 6000 people joined prisoners in California’s Secure Housing Units (SHUs) in a hungerstrike to win 5 core demands: 1) End group punishment and administrative abuse; 2) Abolish the debriefing policy and modify active/inactive gang status criteria; 3) End long-term solitary confinement; 4) Provide adequate and nutritious food; 5) Expand programming and privileges for indefinite SHU status prisoners. All of Us or None members demonstrated in front of the State Capitol and California Dept. of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) offices, organized in communities around the state for people to support the strike, and participated in a public hearing at the California Assembly. Family members, lawyers, and community members continue to work to win the core demands and end long-term solitary confinement in California and everywhere.

- We participated in the convening of the Formerly-Incarcerated and Convicted Peoples’ Movement (FICPM). Over 20 people from the Bay Area chapter participated in the November 2, 2011 meeting, with 300 other formerly-incarcerated or –convicted people from 18 states. We adopted a collective National Platform, and pledged mutual support and unity around the Platform, specifically a 2012 voter registration campaign.

- We represent All of Us or None as part of the United Workers’ Congress (formerly Excluded Workers’ Congress). The United Workers’ Congress was originally formed as the Excluded Workers’ Congress at the 2010 U.S. Social Forum in Detroit. Sectors of unrecognized and unrepresented workers came together: farmworkers, domestic workers, Southern workers, guest workers, day laborers, workfare mothers, taxi drivers, tipped workers, along with formerly-incarcerated workers. All of Us or None members have participated in regular meetings of the coordinating committee and we have been honored to attend their national conference.

- Our 12TH annual Community Giveback provided bikes and toys for over 150 children. Every year we raise money and provide new bikes and toys during the winter holidays to children whose parents are in prison. We take photos of the children with their bikes and send them to their incarcerated parent, sharing the joy on the children’s faces with their father or mother. We are committed to giving back to our communities everywhere.

- We organized a national call and Day of Action against Solitary Confinement at San Quentin with Occupy4Prisoners. Over 800 people demonstrated our solidarity with prisoners in a demonstration at the gates of San Quentin last February. Young people from the Occupy Movement listened to men who had been inside San Quentin’s cages and people who had been locked up in prisons throughout California. We built the campaign to win the core demands of the hungerstrike, and to support human rights for prisoners everywhere. All of Us or None members continue to be active in Occupy4Prisoners.

- We advocated with our representatives in the California legislature. Members of All of Us or None spoke directly with legislators advocating their support for a legislative program defined by our community’s needs. We participated in state-wide Lobby Days to support Ban the Box fair hiring initiatives in cities and counties, an expansion of clean slate/dismissal opportunities to people in county jails, providing identification to everyone released from prison, jail, or juvenile jail, and other bills. We also succeeded in stopping several terrible bills, including an effort to stop anyone with a record from volunteering in their children’s school.
- We stopped expansion of the gang injunctions in Oakland. All of Us or None was part of the Stop the Injunctions Coalition in Oakland. Police have always used racial profiling to target young people of color -- gang injunctions are the latest tool for police to criminalize our young people. We succeeded in limiting the number of injunctions in

Oakland to 2 rather than the 12 originally proposed by the City Attorney.

- We are registering formerly-incarcerated and –convicted people to vote. In California, people on probation or off parole have the right to vote. Unfortunately, county registrars of voters and probation/parole officers often give out incorrect information, so thousands of formerly-incarcerated people believe they no longer can vote. All of Us or None is educating our communities about voting rights, and the issues in the upcoming election. We also filed a lawsuit in California courts, All of Us or None v. Secretary of State Debra Bowen, to win back voting rights for people in county jails, sentenced under California’s new sentencing structure. The California Supreme Court recently refused to hear All of Us or None v. Bowen, effectively denying thousands of people in county jails their right to vote.

- Our Outreach Committee has actively promoted our goals and campaigns. Members of our Outreach Committee have made presentations at high schools, clean slate summits, community organizations, and organized at numerous community festivals and events. We’ll be going door-to-door publicizing our next Townhall to Stop Jail Construction in San Mateo County, as well as gathering signatures on petitions to stop the jail.

SACRAMENTO

All of Us or None-Sacramento is continuing our focus on providing Clean Slate services and assisting people in registering to vote. In 2011 we held several clean slate summits, with spectacular turnout from volunteer attorneys and law students – over 200 people were trained to provide clean slate services. We brought clean slate services to many different neighborhoods in Sacramento. This year we will hold a Clean Slate Day on Saturday, November 10, with our new partner, the Wiley Manuel Bar Association of Sacramento County. The location is to be determined. Also, the Sacramento Law Foundation has shown an interest in providing Clean Slate services to the Laotian community; they will provide language interpreters and possibly a location.

All of Us or None-Sacramento is partnering with Behind the Walls and McGeorge Law School Women’s Club in a voter registration drive. The goal is to identify, educate, and register any and all individuals on probation, parole, or classified under AB 109 post-release community supervision (PRCS). We are determined to make our voices heard in this election, and to mobilize our community’s voting power to make a difference.

EAST PALO ALTO

In addition to registering voters before November’s upcoming election, the East Palo Alto team has been out almost every week at local events getting the word out about San Mateo County’s ill-advised plans to build a new jail. “Not only would the jail cost \$155 million to construct, it would cost upwards of \$40 million per year to operate,” says All of Us or None chapter member and Legal Services for Prisoners with Children Executive Director, Dorsey Nunn. The California state government has already turned down San Mateo’s request to fund the jail, so the money would come from a new sales tax.

Meanwhile, social programs like health care and education are certain to suffer as a result of resources being funneled into jail construction and upkeep. “What the construction of the jail will mean for people in San Mateo County is that it will rob resources from the elderly, the young, and people with health problems for the next 30 years,” Nunn explains.

As a member of Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB – a coalition to reduce prison spending statewide), All of Us or None East Palo Alto (AOUON-EPA) has been circulating a petition against the new jail. The group has been phone-banking regularly, and has also collected hundreds of signatures—at least “several yards’ worth,” according to Nunn. The East Palo Alto City Council, Police Chief, and former Sheriff have all

taken public positions opposing the new jail.

AOUON-EPA also conducted a petition drive in which 10 percent of the residents of East Palo Alto signed on to oppose the construction of a jail anywhere in San Mateo County. The chapter continues to work to make sure that locally, everyone is aware of the ways that a new jail could threaten their communities. Contact Richard Stamper at stamper.richard@yahoo.com for more information on the petition, or to join the outreach team.

LOS ANGELES

Our voter registration drive is a core campaign of All of Us or None-Los Angeles. We have been making strides in getting folks to register or to re-register if their voter registration information has lapsed or changed. At our June monthly meeting we held a Deputy Registrar Training where 28 people were trained to assist people in registering to vote. Now we are scheduled to register prisoners in the 7 facilities of the Los Angeles County Jail – a process which will take over 50 volunteers and several days. We are airing radio public service announcements about voting rights on KGLH radio, an effort to also get into the message into the jails and widely publicized. Another voter registration training will be held in Long Beach on September 18.

Because of our efforts, Ban the Box fair hiring reforms were passed in Compton last year and in Carson this year. We are currently discussing how to Ban the Box in Long Beach. Long Beach 6th District Councilman Dee Andrews office has expressed the importance of Ban the Box and does support our efforts.

AOUON-LA and A New Way of Life Re-entry Project have actively opposed the Community Care Facilities Ordinance currently being considered by the Los Angeles City Council. This ordinance would eliminate shared housing in single family neighborhoods in South LA and force more people into homelessness. We are demanding that the City Council reject this ordinance. Our chapter has also advocated statewide for an expansion of clean slate services (AB 2263), an end to the media ban in California prisons (AB 1270), expanding eligibility for food stamps (AB 828), and statewide ban the box hiring reforms for all public employment (AB 1831). We have made the long trip to Sacramento to talk with our elected officials, to educate them that these bills affect public safety and create a way for people to stay out of jail or prison.

Every month, All of Us or None-Los Angeles and the New Way of Life Reentry Legal Clinic hold an “expunge-ment” clinic. Under California law, certain convictions can be dismissed on the record, or “expunged,” though they remain visible on your RAP sheet (Record of Arrest and Prosecutions). This dismissal process clears certain convictions from your record, and legally permits an applicant to answer “NO” to the question on job applications, “Do you have any felony convictions?” The Clinic is held the second Saturday of each month, from 10 am to 12 noon, at the Tom Bradley Multi-Purpose Senior Citizen Building, 10957 Central Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90059. For more information about the Reentry Legal Clinic, contact Joshua@anewwayoflife.org

RIVERSIDE

The Riverside Chapter continues to grow its membership in order to have more people participating in our cause and rallying towards our goals. In July we saw a 30% increase in our meeting attendance.

The Registrar of Voters provided Voter Registration training at our July meeting and issued 12 Voter Registration training certificates. We have a box of unsigned voter registration forms that were provided to us by the Restore Our Vote campaign (R.O.V.), and the numbers on them have been recorded. This is the way that R.O.V. will see how many registrations come to them from All Of Us Or None. We plan to record how many voters we register so we will know for ourselves in case of any discrepancies.

We are rolling out our voter registration plan starting on July 29th, targeting places such as DPSS offices, treatment centers, court houses, jails (we have 4 in our county) and special events in our area.

We have asked R.O.V. for a report back on how many voter registrations have come in from the county jails in our area. If none have come back, then we plan on asking for oversight into this matter. The Riverside Sheriffs have turned down our offer to come in and voluntarily assist them with voter registration and have assured us that they do it. Our group membership pointed out to R.O.V.

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that many times the jail guards place low priority on the voting rights of prisoners. While they may have the forms, these forms are likely to sit in some desk and not actually be available to the incarcerated person who maintains the right to vote. We will continue to follow this concern and hold the Sheriff accountable.

On July 29th Riverside AOUON will attend the To Do Fest in Riverside and have an information table.

September 1 Riverside will host its first back pack give away. We were able to get a local amusement park to allow us to come in before the park opens and give away our back packs. Each child will also receive a free ticket to ride all day at the amusement park, courtesy of Castle Park.

We continue to work towards making our presence known in the community as All of Us or None. We are sharing our message that unity is key in achieving a solution for the discrimination that far too many of us have come to accept as “life after prison.”

We are interested in partnering, or networking with other chapters in an effort to learn from them, and exchange ideas and strategies. We have yet to discuss our long-term strategies for local concerns, thus we have much work to do.

We are Comrades and will continue to build an effective and sustainable chapter here in an area with one of the worst conviction rates in the state.

SAN DIEGO

All of Us or None-San Diego welcomes everyone interested in fighting for social change to join our chapter and this civil rights movement. We are committed to working with other programs and organizations dedicated to justice and committed to intentional relationship building. We participate in efforts to educate public officials and community leaders about the discriminatory practices we face when we return to our communities from prison or jail. Helping us organize Community Summits, policy initiatives, outreach inside jails and/or prisons, and corresponding to prisoners are a few of the ways volunteers can join in this effort.

All of Us or None means that we must organize across racial, gender, age, class, and geographic lines in order for us to regain our basic human and civil rights. We can no longer allow divisions between us when in the end we all face discrimination. Advocates have spoken for us, but now is the time for us to speak for ourselves. We clearly have the numbers to be heard, the ability to be more than the helpless victims of the system. We must build a movement that clearly shows that our unity is greater than our differences, and our solutions are greater than our problems.

The War on Drugs has had devastating consequences in Mexico and the U.S., with untold loss and suffering through deaths, deportations, and incarceration. All of Us or None San Diego is currently participating in the US/Mexico Caravan for Peace and Justice, from San Diego along a route of over 25 cities including New Orleans, Chicago, New York and ending on September 10 in Washington, D.C. Our Caravan partners include Drug Policy Alliance, NAACP, Border Angels, FACTS (Families to Amend California’s Three Strikes), Moms United to End the War on Drugs, A New PATH, and other community organizations. After the Caravan, we will return to San Diego to continue the struggle for justice and dignity on the California front.

SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY COLLEGE

Formerly-incarcerated students, our families and supporters are starting a NEW All of Us or None chapter on campus at San Bernardino Valley College. All of Us or None members from SBVC attended the statewide All of Us or None retreat in Los Angeles this summer. We returned home enthusiastic about organizing to advance our struggle for full restoration of our rights after prison or jail, and will be holding our first meeting soon.

For more information, contact Linda Subero: lsubero@yahoo.com, or Linda Armstrong: faye.susej0@gmail.com

TEXAS

At first glance San Antonio seems like any other tourist destination, with great food and music that gives the Alamo City its salsa and glamour. We have a growing arts industry like “La Noche De La Gloria” going into its fourth year on October 13, 2012. It has been skillfully organized by Gabriel Velasquez, a well-known and respected Community/Artist Activist who is also a good friend of mine and supporter of the San Antonio chapter of All of Us or None.

La Noche De La Gloria is an economic development project that Gabriel promotes in order to give local artists an opportunity to become self-sustaining artist, not just for one day, but for a life time. Otherwise their talent often goes unnoticed or ignored by the main stream high dollar art industry,

Unfortunately, Art isn’t the only area where economic and other inequalities exist; it spreads out like an infectious virus into many other life lines of the communities of San Antonio. Hidden behind the white veil is a dirty blanket, one stained with the pain and wretchedness of the poverty of struggling neighborhoods, poor education, youth incarceration, parental marginalization, and economically disadvantaged families. Fortunately there is hope in this mess, a way out and up. Fortunately, there’s All of Us or None and all the others who carry on the fight for equality.

In his 1968 Anti-Vietnam Speech Dr. King launched the next evolutionary steps in revolutionary values; Grace Lee Boggs writes in Changing Concepts of Revolution that those radical ideals entailed “building a person-orientated society rather than a thing-orientated society,” moving from a representative democracy to a participatory democracy. It is with this in mind that All of Us or None-Texas is heavily entrenched, addressing the mass plague of voter apathy and community atrophy, with the former being the result of the latter.

Like Gabriel Velasquez, who brings together the once unseen to the forefront of the now visible, we too work to create a strong voice for our communities. Through the expression of our voting power, we are able to move from the seen but not heard state of perpetual existence -- to a state of seen, heard and felt. This can sometimes be hindered by that often expressed voter discontent “my vote doesn’t count anyway.” What does this mean? Is it a numerical failure, that, popularity over numbers prevails? We’ve asked and the reality is that “my vote doesn’t count anyway” means, at least, to the dissatisfied non-voter of San Antonio, that the issues of our communities are never addressed beyond the election campaign. More often the blanket party message promotes the politics of the party, rather than the politics of the people or our community.

We are left with the strategy of rebuilding an army of patriots, reinvested in the power of worldwide democratic values that is taking place all across the globe in many different and sometimes controversial forms. This can only be accomplished by local communities mustering up the expressive force of their voice onto the stage of political power. All of Us or None-Texas and our allies in LULAC (United League of Latin American Citizens) are working to ensure that we continue to do what Wayne Jacobs of Philadelphia calls Registration, Education and Participation (REP). This is one way we will empower formerly incarcerated people and other disadvantaged communities. We work to advance the change we seek, the change we will achieve.

OKLAHOMA

All of Us or None-Oklahoma is one of the founding chapters of All of Us or None. We suffered devastating loss as a family and community with the deaths of John Bowman and Wayne Thompson, beloved community servants and founding members of the Oklahoma Health Care Project and All of Us or None. But our chapter has persevered through many challenges, and we are active in many areas of community education, advocacy, and service.

Our members are active in informing the community about voting rights for people with past convictions, and connecting people coming out of jail or prison with employment opportunities, and the services and resources they need. We work closely with the Oklahoma Baptist State Convention Prison Ministry and other faith-based groups, as well as statewide policy coalitions and reentry organizations.

Members of our chapter have a long history of advocating for policy change, which we are continuing with our YES on S.Q. 762 campaign. (State Questions are ballot initiatives in Oklahoma.) S.Q. 762 will be on the ballot this November, and passing it will remove the Governor from the parole process for people convicted of non-violent offenses. We are working hard to make sure this initiative passes by a large margin of voters.

“The Detroit Chapter of All of Us or None represents transformation & redemption through self-determination in re-building our communities.”

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OKLAHOMA

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The Real Purpose of SHUs and Super-Maxes

By: Kevin Rashid Johnson

The true purpose of solitary confinement in the Security Housing Units (SHUs) isn't to control gangs and racial violence. In fact, the CDCR has long instigated and facilitated prisoner-on-prisoner violence. From the notorious 'gladiator fights' – where guards at CDCR's Corcoran State Prison set up prisoner fights, gambled on the outcomes, and then shot the prisoners for fun, killing 8 and shooting 43 just between 1989 and 1994 – to massive numbers of prisoner-on-prisoner clashes instigated and manipulated by the notoriously corrupt California prison guards' union to generate public support for building more prisons, to increase prison jobs and dues-paying membership.

In 1999, prisoners at the New Folsom Prison went on a hunger strike protesting being forced onto prison yards with rivals. CDOC Ombudsman Ken Hurdle rejected negotiations, stating "Then you'd have two groups normally aligned on the yard together. They would have only staff as their enemy." This admits officials deliberately facilitating prisoner-on-prisoner violence as a technique of prison control. This is what they fear in the unity shown by the hunger strikers. And it undermines the disunity they need to project them as animals.

Officials welcome and incite gang violence. It creates jobs, justifies their oppression, and enhances their 'control.' Crips co-founder Stanley 'Tookie' Williams, who was killed by the CDCR, exposed this in his book Blue Rage: Black Redemption:

"Yes America, as unbelievable as it may seem, 'hood cops, with impunity, commit drive-bys and other lawless acts. It was common practice for them to abduct a Crip or Bounty Hunter and drop him off in hostile territory, and then broadcast it over a loudspeaker. The predictable outcome was that the rival was either beaten or killed on the spot, which resulted in a cycle of payback... With the cops' Machiavellian presence, the gang epidemic escalated. When gang warfare is fed and fuelled by law enforcement, funds are generated for the so-called anti-gang units. Without gangs, those units would no longer exist."

More revealing is that then-California Governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, rejected massive international pleas to stay Tookie's execution on grounds that Tookie dedicated his book, Life in Prison, to Black revolutionary George Jackson, who was murdered by CDOC officials in 1971. Schwarzenegger said the dedication "defies reason and is a significant indicator that Williams is not reformed." Which brings us closer to exposing the real reasons SHUs exist.

The actual "leaders" officials fear, and who are the prime targets of SHUs and super-maxes are those who are politically conscious and prove able to unite prisoners across racial and other lines.

The proliferation of SHUs and super-maxes began with the Marion Control Unit, which opened in 1972, following the murder of George Jackson and the peaceful 1971 Attica uprising that officials ended with the coldblooded murders of 29 prisoners and 10 civilians, and systematic humiliation and torture of hundreds of prisoners, provoking international outrage. Like the brutal government responses to mass protests in Asia and Afrika this year, when the prisoners of Attica took to the yard in protest, with grievances articulated and represented by politically conscious prisoners, the official response was murder and torture, then high security torture units. In one of the few admissions on record, Ralph Arons, a former warden at Marion, testified in federal court: "The purpose of the Marion Control Unit is to control revolutionary attitudes in the prison and in society at large." Yet U.S. officials deny confining or persecuting people for political beliefs.

In fact, Pelican Bay officials recently banned my own book, Defying the Tomb, as "gang material," a book of political writings and art, which many readers and reviewers have compared to George Jackson's writings, whose books CDOC banned in the 1970s as well. And with the resurgence of prisoners' political consciousness, they've recently begun confiscating this book as "gang material." Like Nazi book burnings and concentration camps, the object is to censor and persecute political consciousness and revolutionary culture amongst the most oppressed peoples. And 'gang' labels are used to "dirty up" the people, practices, and ideas they seek to repress.

Just as I am confined in a remote Virginia super-max, under 'special' conditions of a SHU because of my political beliefs and having co-founded the New Afrikan Black Panther Party as a Party of the oppressed, so too you'll find in these units across Amerika those who hold and practice revolutionary political views and affiliations that are supposed to be constitutionally protected, not persecuted. As the high court once proclaimed, in NAACP v. Button (1963):

"Our form of government is built on the premise that every citizen shall have the right to engage in political expression and association. This right was enshrined in the First Amend-

continued from page 1 "The Development of All of Us or None

- Opposing "Gang" injunctions and Gang Databases
- Supporting Prisoners' Demand To End Solitary Confinement,
- Transforming Conditions in County Jail and Supervision,
- Clean Slate: Expand Clean Slate remedies for formerly-incarcerated people, particular for youth,
- Annual Community Giveback, where we give toys to children of incarcerated parents.

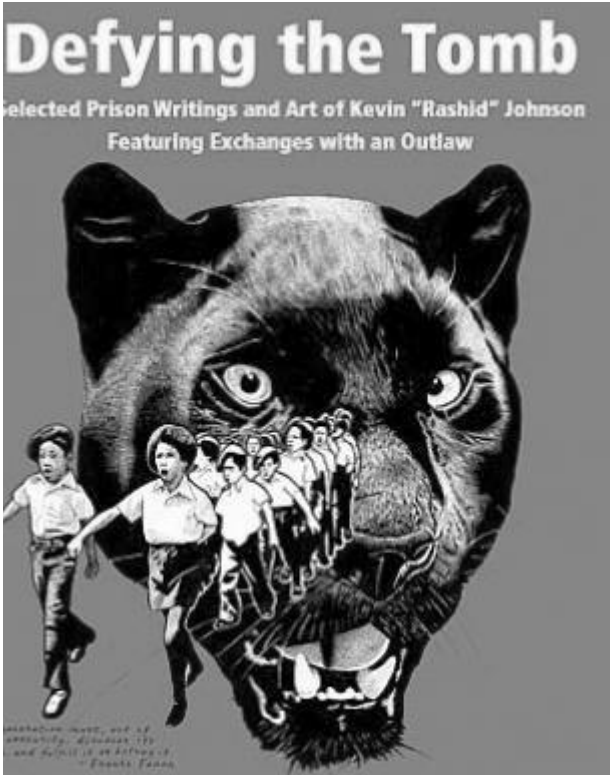
We have also established measures to maintain principled and respectful relationships among our members and with our

ment of the Bill of Rights. Exercise of these basic freedoms in America has traditionally been through the media of political associations. Any interference with the freedom of a party is simultaneously an interference with the freedom of its adherents. All political ideas cannot and should not be channeled into the programs of our two major parties. History has amply proved the virtue of political activity by minority, dissident groups..."

But contrast these political ideals with the political reality that such parties face at the hands of officials, as admitted by Justice Hugo Black's dissenting opinion in Barenblatt v. U.S.: "History should teach us...that...minority parties and groups which advocate extremely unpopular social or governmental innovations will always be typed as criminal gangs and attempts will always be made to drive them out."

This is the function of the SHUs like those that California's prisoners are protesting, and the ones used as a weapon to censor and repress political consciousness.

Resistance to the oppression of these units is the meaning of the hunger strikes. Six thousand six hundred California prisoners participated in a 3-week-long hunger strike in July 2011, seeking relief from unjust and inhumane conditions. In the face of California Department of Corrections (CDC) officials failing to honor settlement negotiations, the hunger



strike resumed on September 26th, with nearly 12,000 prisoners participating in thirteen of that state's prisons.

"The CDCR has continued to lie about the hunger strike – saying it was organized by gangs and attacking representatives of the strikers and others, depicting them as the 'generals' of the prison gangs and the 'shot callers' who order other prisoners to engage in gang violence.

Dolores, whose son has been in the SHU for 10 years, was quoted in Revolution newsletter #243 as saying: "If that is their [the prisoners'] way of thinking, then why did they just conduct a hunger strike willing to risk their own lives, to suffer on a daily basis in a nonviolent demonstration that spread across California prisons involving thousands and thousands of men crossing all racial lines? It's because they are human beings. They do have dignity, and they want to be heard."

Amerika's oppressed and disenfranchised victims of modern penal enslavement and the New Jim Crow, are struggling like those of generations past for recognition and respect as humyn beings. As a Party of the oppressed, especially the imprisoned, the NABPP-PC stands in unity with the heroic struggles of California's entombed, and call on all freedom-loving people everywhere to take up their cause.

Dare to struggle! Dare to win! All Power to the People!

About Rashid:

Kevin "Rashid" Johnson is the Minister of Defense for the New Afrikan Black Panther Party, Prison Chapter (NABPP-PC). Incarcerated for the past 18 years in conditions of solitary confinement, he has taught himself law and litigated successfully against prisons.

You can purchase Rashid's book Defying the Tomb: Selected Prison Writings and Art of Kevin "Rashid" Johnson; Featuring Exchanges with an Outlaw from Amazon.

REALIGNMENT

A Grassroots Perspective

All of Us or None has been in the forefront of trying to affect a new development in the criminal justice system in California. California's Criminal Justice Realignment Act (Realignment) came into effect in October 2011. Contrary to popular belief, realignment was not a response to the Supreme Court's decision ordering the reduction of California's bloated prison population. Rather, realignment was implemented to reduce California's budget deficit – the state was addressing budgetary concerns instead of human concerns.

In essence, realignment shifts people convicted of "non-serious", "non-sexual", and "nonviolent offenses" out of the state prison system and into county jurisdiction and county jails. People are still being incarcerated, despite other alternatives mandated by law, i.e. drug-treatment, other rehabilitative programming, or county supervision. The shift has resulted in plans by 32 out of 58 counties to expand jail capacity. Realignment has led to a decrease in numbers of people in state prison, but has not decreased the number of people incarcerated in California.

The governing body under Realignment, the Community Corrections Partnership (CCP), is comprised of an Executive Committee (EC) with the ultimate 7 votes and decision-making power. The majority representation of the CCP-EC is law enforcement: chief probation officer, chief of police, sheriff, district attorney, public defender, presiding judge of the superior court, a representative from the County Department of Social Services, Mental Health, or Alcohol and Substance Abuse Programs. A question one must ask: Why isn't there someone from the community, directly impacted by Realignment, represented in the CCP-EC, since they have the ultimate decision-making power?

Realignment poses challenges to community and health. Under realignment, the courts may sentence a person to an unlimited amount of time in county jail. There have been cases where people have been sentenced up to two decades in the county jail. People sentenced to jail under realignment have even less access to health care, mental health care and programming opportunities than they would in state prison. Jails were not designed for long-term incarceration and lack access to sunlight and exercise. Most county jails in California do not allow contact visiting, so children must visit their parents through a small glass window. Funding cuts have closed programs that served as alternatives to incarceration. Realignment is being implemented without the knowledge of or meaningful input from low-income communities of color who are most impacted by the policy.

All of Us or None will be conducting participatory research led by formerly incarcerated people in key counties to document the impact of Realignment on people, families and communities. From this process of community research and outreach, we will develop community-led policy campaigns to ensure that realignment builds healthy communities. All of Us or None seeks to create a new vision of community safety and to institutionalize that vision through criminal justice policies that invest in community health. We believe that the leadership and knowledge of incarcerated, formerly-incarcerated people and our families are central to achieving the systemic change our communities need. Our Realignment campaign aims to increase access to employment, housing and social services, stronger family and social relationships, and improved mental and physical health in low-income communities of color by reducing incarceration.

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Church where his ecclesiastical duties included counseling, managing staff, and coordinating the feeding of over 150 people on a weekly basis. Furthermore, while many activists from the 60s and 70s have either "retired" from activism, or passed away, Elder has remained steadfast in his determination to leave this world a better place than he inherited it.

His present affiliations include: U.N.I.A. San Francisco, Sponsor for a computer program for young men and women, Assisting with African Liberation Day celebrations, Malcolm X Film Reception, Juneteenth celebrations, Marcus Garvey Birthday celebration, represented the Bay Area during the Kwanza festivities, and is a founding member of All of Us or None.