



Another Survivor Freed!

Over 27 years after entering prison at age 22, Wanda Brown, returned home to her family and friends in April 2012. Her release was won by pro bono attorneys working with the California Habeas Project from the firms, Hoge, Fenton, Jones & Appel and Covington & Burling. The Habeas Project matches survivors of domestic violence who are incarcerated for crimes related to their experience of abuse and appear eligible for release under a unique California law with volunteer legal teams. Wanda is the 35th survivor of domestic violence freed from prison through the efforts of pro bono attorneys associated with the Habeas Project. She was convicted in 1985 when little was known about domestic violence and its effects. Her attorneys began investigating her case in 2006 and filed a habeas petition on her behalf in 2010. After hundreds of pages of briefing and an oral argument in court, the San Francisco District Attorney's Office agreed to settle the case. The Habeas Project is still seeking volunteer legal teams

to represent 18 incarcerated survivors of domestic violence. For more information contact Catherine@prisonerswithchildren.org foto: Wanda Brown (L) with her attorney, Erin Smith (R)

LSPC at the State Capitol

This year we're actively tracking over 100 bills and co-sponsoring two. The anti-shackling bill (AB2530-Skinner) curtails the use of shackles on pregnant women who are incarcerated. The Ban the Box bill (AB 1831-Dickinson), removes questions or check-off boxes inquiring into a job applicant's conviction history from city and county agency job applications. Both of these bills passed the CA Assembly in late May.

Collaboration with our partners in [Californians United for a Responsible Budget](#) (aka the CURB Coalition) and the [Women's Policy Institute](#) of the Women's Foundation of California (WPI) has been a key component of our work this year. It is clear from our interactions in the



capitol, that LSPC is becoming recognized as a consistent and effective force in Sacramento. Be on the look-out for action alerts on these bills and a bill to lift the Media Access Ban (AB 1270) which will increase journalist access to California prisons. foto: WPI Justice Team with Curtis Notsinneh (second from right) Senior Legislative Aide to Assemblymember Tom Ammiano

Challenging Solitary Confinement

In March, lawyers working on behalf of California prisoners in solitary confinement filed a [petition](#) with the United Nations, calling for UN action against California's prison administration for its violations of international law. LSPC is serving as co-counsel on the petition and is joined by thirteen other organizational petitioners including the Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law, American Friends Service Committee, and the Disability Rights Legal Center. The petition, filed with three UN bodies, (the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the Human Rights Council, and the General Assembly) seeks an on-site investigation, an independent assessment of medical and mental health conditions, and a report condemning California solitary confinement practices and calling upon California to terminate its abusive policies.



Federal Lawsuit Filed On May 31, the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of prisoners at Pelican Bay State Prison who have spent between 10 and 28 years in solitary confinement. Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, California Prison Focus, Siegel & Yee and the Law Offices of Charles Carbone are co-counsel on the case. The named plaintiffs include hunger strikers, among them several of the principal negotiators for the strike. The class action suit alleges that prolonged solitary confinement violates Eight Amendment prohibitions against cruel and unusual punishment, and that the absence of meaningful review for SHU placement violates the prisoners' right to due process. To learn more about the case, read the complaint and [take action here](#). Visit [Prison Hunger Strike Solidarity Committee](#) to get involved.

All of Us or None All-Chapter Retreat Reflects Growth of Civil Rights Movement



The weekend of May 5 & 6, 2012, over 60 formerly-incarcerated people, family and allies convened in Los Angeles for an all-chapter retreat and planning session. Organizers from Detroit (MI), San Antonio (TX), and San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Long Beach, San Bernardino Valley College, Riverside, San Diego, and the San Francisco Bay discussed campaign strategy, coalition-building, and chapter development. We were joined by representatives from other organizations of formerly-incarcerated people including: Transgender Intersex Justice Project (TGIJP), Homies Unidos, CURYJ (Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice), Youth Justice Coalition, New Way of Life Reentry Legal Services, and Occupy4Prisoners. The weekend forged new friendships and alliances, and coalesced a powerful network of organizers around the state and nation. Time was far too

short for our ambitious agenda - one next step will be an inter-chapter exchange, for deeper discussion of unified strategies and lessons learned. The California chapters agreed to organize a community dialogue about "public safety realignment," and all chapters nationwide will be registering formerly and currently-incarcerated people to vote.

LSPC Files Law Suit to Protect Voting Rights In March, All of Us or None, LSPC, the League of Women Voters, and a woman confined in San Francisco jail filed suit in the California Court of Appeal to protect the voting rights of individuals with a conviction. After the court denied the petition we filed a petition for review with the California Supreme Court. The case concerns the effect of California's historic criminal justice "realignment" legislation on the voting rights of individuals who fall under its provisions. In December 2011, the Secretary of State issued a memorandum to local elections officials stating that individuals sentenced under realignment are not entitled to vote. This policy immediately denies 85,000 people the right to vote! Our case challenges the Secretary of State's interpretation of the law and asks the court to ensure that these individuals are permitted to vote in the November 2012 and all future elections. The ACLU of Northern California is lead counsel on the case, with the Law Office of Robert Rubin, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area, Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, a New Way of Life Reentry Project, and Social Justice Law Project acting as co-counsel. For more information see the [press release](#).

Putting the Injustice System on Trial! On April 24th All of Us or None members participated in a rally and street theater performance in downtown Oakland in solidarity with Occupy the Justice Department actions in Washington, DC. The performance, which put the criminal "injustice" system on trial, was held against the backdrop of the "Remember Them" monument, featuring sculptures of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Maya Angelou and others. Witness after witness testified against the system, played by attorney Dan Siegel (National Lawyers Guild). After all the testimony was taken, the jury (the audience!) found the system guilty on all charges. [Watch Manuel La Fontaine's testimony](#) and [hear the inspiring sentence](#) pronounced by Judge Jerry (played by All of Us or None organizer, Jerry Elster).



LSPC in the Media

[After Twenty-Six Years in Prison: Reflections on Healing](#) by Jerry Elster

"At one time my mother had to have me bussed, they had to start a bussing program to desegregate the schools. She got the bright idea to put me on a bus — why I don't know, with my attitude! — to a school called El Camino Real out in the San Fernando Valley. That was my first real contact with a large portion of the white community. Everything was different. The school didn't look like jail, it looked like college. The staff didn't talk to students like inmates in the wards."

[Mic Check!](#) by Dorsey Nunn

"The irony of this situation is that while the City of Menlo Park envisions the enormous benefits that Facebook could bring to the city, San Mateo County is envisioning locking more people up."

[Unchain My Heart](#) by Karen Shain

"We thought passing our anti-shackling bill would be easy. After all, who would want to be seen arguing that pregnant women should wear chains? And in many ways it was easy! We never saw a 'no' vote in the legislature. Even the prison guards union came out in support of our bill!"

LSPC Welcomes Summer 2012 Interns

LSPC's staff efforts are multiplied many times by the energetic contributions of volunteers and student interns around the year. This summer we're pleased to be working with seven law school students. Interns are pitching in on the production of updated manuals for prisoners and their families on a number of topics, legal research in support of our public impact litigation, correspondence with prisoners and public policy trips to Sacramento. They will also assist in conducting family law classes at Valley State Prison for Women. foto: front row l-r, Mick Kinkead (CUNY Law), Steven Butts (Golden Gate Univ), Kelsey Yoro (Golden Gate Univ) back row l-r Shara Neff (McGeorge), Molly Zimney (USF) Brittany Stoneseifer (Hastings), Brandy DeOrnellas (Harvard)



June 12th Rally: All of Us or None and other CURB Coalition Members rally on the North steps of the Capitol in Sacramento in favor of AB 1270 which would lift the Media Access Ban and allow greater journalist access to California prisons. The bill has passed the Assembly and will be voted on in the Senate this summer.

