

Media Advisory

May 9, 2013

Grassroots Leaders to Legislators: We Have the Right To Remain Silent!

Formerly Incarcerated People Travel to CA State Capitol in Quest For Democracy

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What: Formerly Incarcerated People's Quest for Democracy Legislative Briefing on polices that impact the ability of formerly incarcerated people to fully participate in society. Following the briefing, participants will conduct lobbying visits to their representatives to weigh in on bills that concern their right to vote, work and contribute to their communities.

Who: The Quest for Democracy day is organized by a number of organizations including All of Us or None, [Legal Services for Prisoners with Children](#), [The Center for Young Women's Development](#) (San Francisco), [Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice/CURYJ](#) (Oakland), [Project Safe Return](#) (Richmond) [Fathers & Families of San Joaquin](#) (Stockton), the [YouthJustice Coalition](#), [A New Way of Life](#) (Los Angeles) and others.

When: Monday, May 13, 2013

Where: 9:00-9:30am: Gathering on west side of the Capitol - Sacramento, CA
10am: Legislative briefing on the 4th floor of the State Capitol Rm 4202

Background: On Monday May 13, grassroots leaders from throughout the state of California, many of them executive directors of community service organizations, will participate in a legislative briefing and day of lobbying on public safety issues. The Formerly Incarcerated People's Quest for Democracy Legislative Briefing will include presentations on voting and employment rights as well as improving opportunities for incarcerated and re-entry youth.

The trip was organized in response to [An Open Call](#) that went out several weeks ago stating: As formerly incarcerated people we have been told on more than one occasion: "You have the right to remain silent!" However, when the suffering becomes too unbearable and negatively impacts all aspects of our personal, profession, family and community life, we have an obligation to speak up. The need to speak up is especially acute when it appears that this suffering is designed to outlast our jail or prison sentences.

"For many of us this is our freedom ride," said co-organizer, Dorsey Nunn, Executive Director of Legal Services for Prisoners with Children. "Some of us have been on many bus rides going in the wrong direction. We are going to Sacramento to knock on doors to gain access to democracy. There's a lot of talk about "re-entry." We want re-entry into democracy, we pay taxes too. It is difficult to remain silent while current policies drain our resources to the disadvantage of our families, our community and ourselves" said Nunn. Co-organizer, Susan Burton, Executive Director of A New Way of Life, said "The reason for this trip is nothing less than the full restoration of our civil and human rights. We contribute a lot to our communities and with better public safety policies we can contribute much much more."

The Quest for Democracy briefing and lobbying visits are timed to coincide with the California legislature's consideration of numerous bills that affect the participant's right to vote, work and feed their families. These include two employment related bills, AB218 (Dickinson) and AB870 (Jones-Sawyer), designed to give people with conviction histories a fair chance when applying for a job. These bills build on "[Ban the Box](#)" policies that have already been implemented in over 50 cities and 5 states across the country. AB 149 (Weber) would facilitate voting for people being held in county jails, 60-70% of whom, depending on the county, are being held in jail because they cannot afford bail. SB 283 Hancock would repeal California's exclusion of people with felony drug convictions from receiving Cal-Fresh or CalWorks aid following 14 other states that have opted out of this exclusion. Youth advocates will speak out on several bills improving opportunities for incarcerated youth and youth reentry including SB 61(Yee) and AB915 (Jones-Sawyer).

Tentative Agenda: Formerly Incarcerated People's Quest for Democracy Legislative Briefing - State Capitol, Rm. 4202

Building Authentic Partnership with formerly incarcerated people to craft policy that works

10:00-10:15am Welcome and Overview

Introductions of Formerly Incarcerated leaders and acknowledgement of elected officials in the room (30 seconds each)

Name, Organization, Title, Legislative District & County

Voting rights – Restoring democracy for formerly incarcerated, AB 938 (Weber) 10:15-10:30am

Dorsey Nunn, Legal Services with Prisoners with Children

Susan Burton, A New Way of Life

Formerly incarcerated clergy member, PICO

Assembly member Dr. Shirley Weber, District 79 - invited

Youth Justice - Improving opportunities for incarcerated youth and youth reentry, SB 61(Yee) and AB915 (Jones-Sawyer) 10:30-10:45am

Tanisha Denard, Tyrone Sinclair, Kim McGill, Youth Justice Coalition

George Galvis, Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice

Sammy Nunez, Fathers and Families of San Joaquin

Senator Leland Yee Ph.D., representing San Francisco and San Mateo Counties - invited

Ban the Box -Building a stronger economy for CA by removing employment barriers for formerly incarcerated AB 870 (Jones-Sawyer) and AB 218 (Dickinson) 10:45-11:00am

Linda Evans, All of Us or None

LaVern Vaughn , Safe Return Project - CCISCO

Marlene Sanchez, Center for Young Women's Development

Assembly member Reggie Jones-Sawyer, District 59 - invited

Assembly member Roger Dickinson, District 7 - invited

Q & A 11:00-11:10am

Closing 11:10-11:5 am