

June 4, 2024



Welcome to The Drop LWOP Coalition's Bulletin!

The bulletin will provide updates on all things related to the Coalition – events, legislation, workshops, resources, and everything in between, and it will arrive in your inbox on a quarterly basis. We encourage you to spread it far and wide!

If you have news, stories, or information for sharing or if you have questions, please feel free to reach out and email droplwopoutreach@gmail.com.

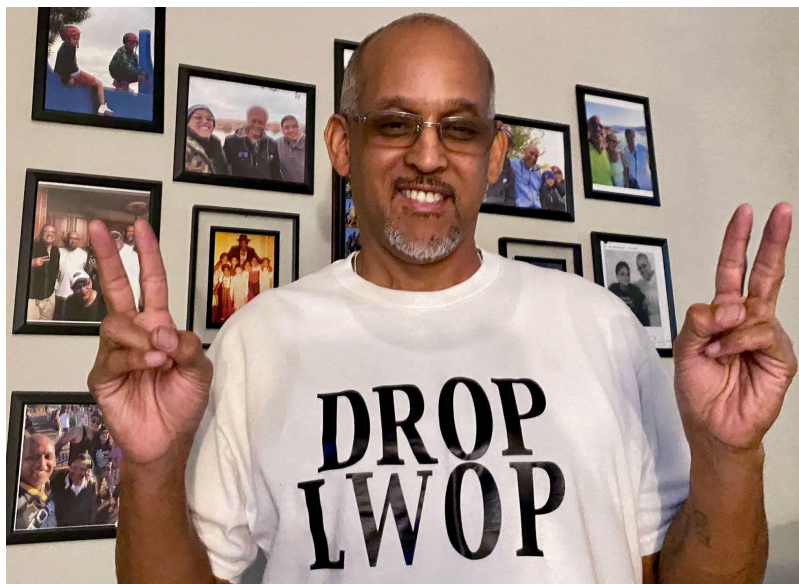
Looking to send the Drop LWOP Bulletin to a friend? Feel free to send them to our [website](#), where the Bulletins will be uploaded regularly!

The Coalition is working hard to expand our reach to every corner of the State of California. To that end, we would like to connect with folks who live in or have connections to **East LA, Riverside, Orange County, or San Diego**.

Please reach out to droplwopoutreach@gmail.com if you are someone with ties to these areas- we'd love to hear from you!

Welcome Joseph Bell and Jornay Rodriguez!

The DROP LWOP Coordinating Committee is very excited to welcome Joe Bell as our very first coalition hire. Joe began working as the part-time DROP LWOP Coordinating Associate starting March 2024. In this position, Joe coordinates communication among the Coalition's work groups and enhances the involvement of formerly incarcerated people and family members in the Coalition. Joe will also participate in the Coalition's Coordinating Committee. Please welcome Joe to his new role in DROP LWOP!



A little bit about Joe:

While serving LWOP, Joe

- Started an at-risk youth diversion program called Education, Diversion, and Goals to Endeavor (EDGE)
- Was a founding member of a mentor program (Life Line for Youthful Offenders)
- And earned an Associate's Degree in Social Science

In 2018, the California Governor recognized Joseph's transformation and commuted his sentence, giving him the opportunity for parole.

Joe believes leading well means having the wisdom to listen to others: "Effective leaders are those who know when and how to follow." We are grateful to have you as one of our leaders!

Welcome Jornay Rodriguez!

Jornay Rodriguez is the new CCWP Drop LWOP Inreach Administrative Assistant! Jornay supports the Inreach Committee with correspondence to our members on the inside. He volunteered his time for over 5 years before taking on this assistant position and Drop LWOP is very grateful for his consistent dedication. Jornay is a formerly incarcerated person who served 23 years on a 25 years-life sentence. He was granted parole in November of 2018 and was approved April 26, 2019 by Governor Newsom. Jornay paroled to San Francisco where he found community with CCWP and other organizations who support those both inside and out. Welcome to your new role Jornay!

Since being home Jornay has found purpose in fighting against Life Without Parole (LWOP). Jornay has

- Earned an Associate's Degree in Communications
- Was discharged from parole in 2021
- Corresponds with LWOPs who are still inside institutions
- Volunteers for Drop LWOP events

We are thrilled to have Jornay on our team and stand by him in his belief that change happens "starting with oneself and creating space for that change to grow." We cannot wait for all that Jornay will support us with at Drop LWOP.



GOOD NEWS!

We mentioned it above, but it's *such* good news it bears repeating! Governor Newsom commuted 12 individuals serving LWOP on March 29, 2024. This gives us hope as we work to FREE THEM ALL! If you would like to personally thank Governor Newsom, follow the instructions [in this document](#).

Lee Robinson, a Black trans man who served 20 years of an LWOP sentence, was resentenced to 13 years as of the morning of May 20th, 2024. After being recommended by

the DA and denied, he was finally resentenced under California's amended felony murder law (SB 1437). This resentencing of someone with an LWOP sentence under SB 1437 is a significant victory and gives hope to other LWOP people who are fighting for resentencing. Welcome home, Lee!

Washington Case Sets Stage for CA

As the struggle to challenge the inhumanity and unconstitutionality of Life Without Parole (LWOP) continues in the courts, we are inspired to see the [Washington Supreme Court affirm](#) on May 23rd that a life sentence with no potential release date is unconstitutional when applied to 18-to 20-year-olds because it denies discretion to consider the mitigating qualities of youth. **As a coalition working to end LWOP sentencing altogether, we believe strongly that all people have the capacity—and the right—to grow, change, and transform themselves. Recognizing and nurturing this possibility makes all of our communities safer than the damaging impacts of perpetual punishment.**

Read the rest of Drop LWOP's statement [here](#) and more background via the [Davis Vanguard](#).

Hardin Hearing Update

After much anticipation, an unfortunate ruling was issued in the case of People v. Hardin. In this case, the court considered whether the exclusion of people serving life without parole (LWOP) from youth offender parole hearings violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. After an incredible effort by attorneys representing Mr. Hardin and many others who submitted amicus briefs in support of his case, the Court decided not to rectify this glaring inequity impacting those sentenced to LWOP for offenses committed between the ages of 18 and 26.

You can read our full statement on the Hardin Ruling [here](#). You can also find our very own Joseph Bell's Letter to the Editor in response to the Ruling in The [SF Chronicle](#)!

Legislative Updates

We are seeing some positive momentum with SB94 - let's keep it up! Here are some ways to get plugged in:

- Keep an eye out for an email from Ella Baker Center regarding Power Hours to push SB94 through the Assembly. Template emails and phone scripts will be provided to all who participate.
- Fill out [this link](#) to let us know your district - this will help us organize our efforts to pass SB94!
- Contact your assembly person weekly (!) to let them know you're in support of SB94. Need help finding your assembly person? Click [here](#)!

- The Outreach Team is hoping to plan an in-person event in Southern California to support district efforts. Want to help? Email Emme at droplwopoutreach@gmail.com.

Media Committee:

The Media and Communications committee is hard at work! Their priorities right now include revamping our Coalition's postcards to the Governor to support commutations and solidifying our Coalition's rapid responses, one of which can be found [here](#) regarding the very good news of Governor Newsom's 18 commutations and 37 pardons in March.

Outreach Committee:

The Outreach Committee had the pleasure of coordinating an in-person meet-up for Drop LWOP organizers in the Bay Area to reconnect with each other and learn a little more about why each of us is in this fight.

In addition to organizing fun in-person events, the Outreach Committee is working hard to streamline our orientation process and raise awareness of SB94 through online events and presentations. **Do you know of any organizations in Southern California that would like to learn about SB94? If so, reach out to droplwopoutreach@gmail.com!**

Inreach Committee:

The Inreach Team is working hard to restructure and organize our communication system to the inside! They are diligently writing support letters for those who have requested them. Additionally, Inreach has new volunteers helping with these efforts - this committee is incredibly grateful for all the help and support.

Upcoming Events!

Shoes of the Forgotten is an event that will take place at Central California's Women's Facility on Saturday, August 3rd to center, celebrate, and honor the knowledge and experiences of current and former LWOPs. Please see the event flyer [here](#) and fill out [this form](#) if you would like to attend.

Saturday August 3rd 2024 | 9 AM
Central California Women's Facility



SHOES OF THE FORGOTTEN



This is an educational and motivational event for the people at CCWF, celebrating the inspiration and knowledge of both former and current LWOPs. We hope to fill each backpack with information about what resources are available for people serving LWOP, organizational stickers, pins, pencils, one page informational resource about your organization and how you help fight side by side with our LWOP population. If your organization can not attend we hope you will allow us to bring in your resources. We heal together. Let us show these people they are not forgotten and not alone.

There will be connecting moments dedicated to healing and holding space for lost loved ones. There will be small break-out discussions humanizing individuals currently serving LWOP sentences and allowing them to share their experiences and their expertise. This will be followed by former LWOPs who will share their hope to those still inside.

Lunch and mingling will follow.



Donations will support

- Event Food
- Backpacks for Women inside
- Event Water bottles and Wristbands (Funded and ordered!)

Drop LWOP has signed on as a co-sponsor to the Walk-A-Thon event at Valley State Prison, an event that will highlight the ways in which those with LWOP are eager to give back to their communities. The date of the event is TBD, but you can donate to the Walk-A-Thon's charity of choice [here](#).

Check out this poster below for rallies around the globe fighting to close Guantanamo Bay!

NOW IS THE TIME TO FINALLY CLOSE GUANTÁNAMO!

Join AIUSA and co-sponsoring organizations for vigils to end the ongoing abuse of human rights by closing the detention center once and for all.

Wednesday June 5, 2024
July 3, 2024

RALLY LOCATIONS

- Cobleskill, NY 4-5 PM ET**
514 West Main Street. Contact: Elliot Adams, 518-441-2697
- Detroit, MI 4-4:30 PM**
McNamara Federal Building, 477 Michigan Avenue. Contact: gkgrunow@grunows.net
- London, UK, 1-3PM GMT**
Parliament Square, opposite Houses of Parliament, London SW1. Contact: Sara Birch, 07710 789616
- Los Angeles, CA 12-1 PM PT**
Los Angeles Federal Building, 300 N. Los Angeles. Contact: bluewombat134@startmail.com
- Mexico City, Mexico**
Location TBD. Contact Natalia, 55 3993 1730
- Minneapolis, MN 5-6 PM**
Irene Hixon Whitney Bridge by the sculpture garden. Contact: aarontovo@gmail.com
- New York, NY 5-6 PM ET**
Steps of the NY Public Library, 5th Ave & 42nd St. Contact: debrasweet@worldcantwait.org
- San Francisco, CA 6pm PT**
Harry Bridges Plaza (Embarcadero / Ferry Bldg), San Francisco. Contact: info@aigroup30.org
- Washington DC, Noon-1PM ET**
In front of the White House on Pennsylvania Ave. Contact: Steve Lane, 571- 221-4120

CO-SPONSORS

- Amnesty International
- Center for Constitutional Rights
- Center for Victims of Torture
- Close Guantanamo
- Council on American-Islamic Relations
- Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace
- Muslim Counterpublics Lab
- National Religious Campaign Against Torture
- No More Guantánamos
- NYC Veterans For Peace
- Schoharie Peacemakers
- September 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows
- UK Guantánamo Network
- Witness Against Torture
- World Can't Wait

(A Few) Actions:

Susan Clevenger action:

Susan Clevenger, 49, serving Life Without Parole, has spent nearly half her life in prison. Despite this, she has shown exceptional commitment to rehabilitation, participating in numerous programs, maintaining employment without infractions, and excelling educationally. Her story highlights the potential for rehabilitation. We urge Governor Newsom to commute her sentence, allowing her to appear before the parole board. Support justice that values rehabilitation—sign [this petition today!](#)

Leonard Peltier action:

After a 15-year denial in 2009, Leonard Peltier, the longest-serving US political prisoner, has another parole hearing on Monday, June 10. Check out [this toolkit](#) to learn how to support Leonard Peltier. There is also a prayer vigil for Leonard's compassionate release with more information available [here](#).

Eager to teach others about LWOP sentencing?

Look no further than this thorough [one-pager](#) that provides a helpful and succinct overview of the who, what, when, and why of LWOP.

Support Hotlines:

The Transition Clinic Network Reentry Healthcare Hotline is 1-510-606-6400.

► People can call it collect from inside California prisons as well as from jails that use GTL phone services. The hotline is staffed by trained community health workers with histories of incarceration who can provide information about local clinics, how to get enrolled in Medi-Cal, and how to navigate the healthcare system.

To utilize the Mental Health First Oakland call or text 510-999-9641.

► Mental Health First Oakland responds to mental health crises including, but not limited to psychiatric emergencies, substance use support, and domestic violence situations that require victim extraction. Call or text 510-999-9641 on Fridays and Saturdays 8:00 p.m. - 8:00 a.m. To utilize the National Alliance on Mental Health, call 1-800-950-6264 or by emailing info@nami.org.

The National Alliance on Mental Health provides a wealth of services and can be used to support you through diverse types of situations. Although the helpline is only available Monday through Friday from 10 AM until 8 PM EST, there is a 24/7 text line available. Simply text 'NAMI' to 741-741 for assistance.

► [Here](#) is a list of regional mental health hotlines and support across the state of California.

INTERESTED IN JOINING A WORKGROUP?

LEARN HOW TO GET INVOLVED [HERE](#)

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