

16 February 2025



## 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 regularly. We encourage you to spread it far and wide!

If you have news, stories, or information that should be shared far and wide or if you have questions, please feel free to reach out and email [droplwopoutreach@gmail.com](mailto: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!

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The Coalition is working hard to expand our reach to every corner of the State of California. If you have friends, family, or community members who would like to engage with our work or get involved in any capacity please send them our way! Please reach out to [droplwopoutreach@gmail.com](mailto:droplwopoutreach@gmail.com) or contact us through our [website](#).

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## Clemency Coalition Rally - November 13th, 2024

The Clemency Coalition Rally in the California State Capitol, Sacramento, was a success! We want to express a special thank you to the organizers, performers, and speakers of this event. This event was the production of the Clemency Coalition in partnership with the Drop LWOP coalition. The event promoted pardons and commutations for individuals serving LWOP, and included direct advocacy to legislators by family members and organizers who were at the event, possible through the direct advocacy of organizers to legislators.



*(Organizers at Sacramento State Capitol, rallying in support of Clemency in California. Photo by Courtney Hanson.)*



(Drop LWOP Organizer and Former LWOP Kelly Savage-Rodriquez speaking at the Clemency Rally. Photo by Courtney Hanson.)



(Organizers brought posters uplifting their loved ones and demanding we Drop LWOP! Photo by Courtney Hanson.)

# Legislative and Coalition Updates!

The Legislative Team is prioritizing educating legislators on the LWOP sentence to ensure new assembly members are informed and educated on the injustice of this sentence.

Beyond pushing legislation, the Coalition will launch two distinct and important campaigns in the new year. These campaigns will focus multi-faceted efforts towards fighting for resentencing and increasing commutations for individuals serving LWOP. Stay tuned for more information and ways to plug in!

## Media Committee:

The Media Team is proud to share that our very own Drop LWOP powerhouse organizer and former LWOP Joseph Bell was interviewed for an article in the SF Chronicle entitled, "[He was supposed to die in prison. Now he's on a mission to to abolish life sentences.](#)" In this piece, Joseph talks about his time in prison, his own personal transformation, and the most essential work he is doing now as a member of the Drop LWOP Coalition. Furthering Media's goal to get more Letter to the editors submitted to outlets who are taking the time to write about LWOP, Courtney Hanson's Letter to the editor was published in response to Joseph's article. Check out [this link](#) to read Courtney's letter to the editor. The Media Team is excited by the flurry of LWOP-related publications in the SF Chronicle and is working diligently to expand media coverage of Drop LWOP organizing work and of the death-by-incarceration LWOP sentence.

Additionally, have you ever checked out the Drop LWOP Coalition's Instagram (@drop\_lwop)? If not, now is a good time to start, as the media team has been posting regularly to keep our community in the loop and engaged. If you ever have updates or want to elevate something happening within the Drop LWOP community, feel free to direct message that to our instagram account.

## Outreach Committee:

The outreach team has done some internal restructuring to accommodate changes in the broader Coalition, which means that their new meeting time will be the first (not fourth!) Monday of the month at 5:30pm. If you'd like to join the outreach team, please reach out to [droplwopoutreach@gmail.com](mailto:droplwopoutreach@gmail.com).

Additionally, Drop LWOP organizers based out of Southern California got together at the end of 2024 to share space, support each other and have a good time. We met up at a restaurant where personal and organizing updates were shared, providing a much-needed time for in-person reconnecting and recharging with our community members! Below is a photo of some of those who were able to make it! We are hoping to make more in person events happen throughout California. If you are interested in helping with in-person events please email [droplwopoutreach@gmail.com](mailto:droplwopoutreach@gmail.com).



(Photos of Drop LWOP Organizers who made it to the SoCal Get Together in November called "FreedomsGiving" to celebrate freedom and grassroots organizing!)

## Inreach Committee:

Inreach is continuing to initiate and maintain communication with individuals who are currently serving an LWOP sentence. These efforts are imperative to ensure that those directly impacted by our work are included in the movement and informed every step of the way.

Additionally, the Inreach Team is extremely dedicated to writing support letters and sending resources (i.e. commutation guides) to individuals on the inside. Two sub-committees are running at this time: support letters and inside communication. This work is essential and the Inreach Team could use your support. If you're interested in writing support letters, please [droplwopinreach@gmail.com](mailto:droplwopinreach@gmail.com) (and don't worry, the team will provide guidance on how to write a top-notch letter).

## GOOD NEWS!

The Drop LWOP Coalition is beyond thrilled to announce that former President Joe Biden commuted Leonard Peltier's sentence. Peltier is an Indigenous activist who had been incarcerated for almost half a century. Generations of activists and organizers have fought tirelessly and bravely for this victory. You can read more about Leonard's impending homecoming in this moving [press release](#) by the NDN collective. Leonard Peltier, welcome home!

And the great news continues as we welcome home two individuals who formerly served LWOP, Arleen Dugmore and Elaine Wong! We are so thrilled to have them back in our community, where we need them most. We included a photo of them together at the beach, soaking up freedom!



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# "Second Chances, Stronger Voices: A Voting Rights Homecoming" - November 2nd, 2024

The Drop LWOP Coalition has proudly partnered with Initiate Justice to curate an in-person event in November for folks in the Central Valley. The event was hosted in Fresno, California on Saturday, November 2nd, where Drop LWOP and Initiate Justice welcomed home folks who are celebrating their freedom and prioritized homecoming as much as possible for everyone, including our LWOP community. In addition to these goals and emphasizing education for abolishing LWOP advocacy, the event also included voter education and registering to vote ahead of the 2024 election cycle!



*(DROP LWOP Organizers with Initiate Justice and Fresno Community members at Second Chances, Stronger Voices event. Photo by Courtney Hanson.)*



*(Fresno State Project Rebound partners with Drop LWOP and Initiate Justice to support currently and formerly incarcerated community members! Photo by Courtney Hanson.)*



*(Drop LWOP and Project rebound provide resources for Fresno community members! Photo by Courtney Hanson.)*

# Next Steps + Resources

## **(A Few) Resources:**

### **Some things to check out!**

- ▶ Check out [The Strike](#), a documentary that tells the story of a hunger strike that began at Pelican Bay prison and went on to inspire a statewide protest in California's prisons. This is a profound story of unimaginable resistance and bravery.
- ▶ SF Chronicle published Diana Block's Letter to the Editor that speaks to the grave injustice of sentencing Fantasy Decuir and Lamonte Mims to life in prison for a crime they committed when they were merely 19 years old. Diana's powerful read can be found [here](#).

## **(A Few) Opportunities:**

- ▶ Ella Baker Center is hiring a development manager. Find out more and apply [here!](#)
  - ▶ [Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity](#) is seeking a operations manager that is dedicated to Racial Justice! See more information [here!](#)
  - ▶ Essie Justice Group is hiring, see more information [here](#).
  - ▶ Building Opportunities for Self Sufficiency is hiring, see more information [here](#).
  - ▶ Uncommon law is hiring a law clerk, see more information [here](#).
  - ▶ California Immigrant Policy Center (CIPC) is hiring many roles, see more information [here](#).
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### **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. Save this number on your phone for easy access.

To utilize the National Alliance on Mental Health, call 1-800-950-6264 or by emailing [info@nami.org](mailto: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 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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