

Decarcerate Louisiana

"A Social Change Movement"

OUR VISION: Humanity was not designed for cages. Humans are not meant to be cut off and deprived of the right to strive for and achieve our natural aspirations and longings. The Creator would not have mocked us with the yearning for infinite achievement without wanting us to have the opportunity for realizing it. Prisons are a fundamentally immoral and failed solution to the problems of crime, poverty, and other social ills. Therefore, we envision a world without prisons. A world where investments in public health, education, sustainability, and true democracy make police and prisons obsolete. A world where we will keep each other safe and hold each other accountable when we make mistakes or cause harm, because our communities will be strong enough to rely on each other without relying on cages and police, which only create a false sense of safety for some while systemically enslaving others. Therefore, we claim excellence, peaceful industry, inventiveness, higher achievement and the best there is in the world as inalienable birthrights, because these goals are not too good or too magnificent for us as human beings. To the contrary, all humans were designed to reach their fullest potential!

OUR MISSION: Our mission is to engage in grassroots organizing to (1) Abolish slavery as punishment for a crime; (2) Dismantle the Prison-Industrial Complex by enacting and/or amending laws to provide for reparations and community reinvestment, pardons, clemency, furloughs, rehabilitation and re-entry, voting rights, reinstatement of Pell grants, and the recognition of prisoners' full human rights; 3) End the historic and ongoing systemic oppression of the People.



OUR HISTORY:

The very land on which Angola Prison sits was once a slave plantation. The Angola Plantation was named for the country in Africa from where most of its slaves had been stolen. Before that, the land was stolen during the genocide of Native Americans, as was all land in this country. Not much is different today. Louisiana incarcerates more people per capita than any other state, the vast majority of whom are Black and are still forced to work on cotton fields and perform other slave-labor for the profit of the State. Decarcerate Louisiana continues the long tradition that started with organized slave rebellions in pre-Civil War times and continues today with prisoners organizing to bust the historic legacy of slavery and the ghetto-to-prison pipeline that deprive us of our rights, powers, possibilities, and freedom. Just as treaties signed to protect Native people's land rights were broken and ignored, so was the Emancipation Proclamation that allegedly freed enslaved Africans, and so was the 1946 Full Employment Act and other laws that have been enacted to protect the rights of all workers. Native people are still fighting to protect their lands, people of African descent are still fighting against enslavement, and workers are still fighting to be free from capitalistic exploitation. Decarcerate Louisiana was formed by prisoners inside Angola who recognize that abolition of slavery, prisons, and capitalism must be fought for in order to achieve our liberation and the liberation of all people.

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OUR PLAN: Through grassroots organizing on the ground and via social media, we want to form a pipeline of teach-ins, study circles, and workshops running from the neighborhoods, classrooms, and prisons to raise awareness about the relationship between antebellum (pre-Civil War) slavery, systemic oppression, and prisons as the new forced labor system. We want to build on these activities by recruiting and developing leaders to initiate and supervise teach-ins, study circles, workshops, discussion forums, fundraisers, press conferences, rallies, marches, demonstrations, boycotts, strikes, protests, and lobbying campaigns to pressure legislature to pass laws to decarcerate Louisiana. "Confidence, unbounded, unshaken faith in yourself, which even amounts to boldness at times, is absolutely necessary in all great undertakings and is the very foundation of all great achievement," says an eminent poet



What Does the Word Decarcerate Mean?

The word Decarcerate is a useful concept. It means to release control of our government from corporate domination; to divest from the Prison-Industrial Complex and excessive military expenditures born out of capitalistic enterprise and greed; to root out systemic oppression and bust the ghetto-to-prison-pipeline; to redirect our tax dollars to investments in higher-education, economic development, living wage jobs, home ownership programs, rehabilitative and reentry initiatives for prisoners and other areas of human welfare so as to end many of the social ills which would automatically end our reliance on police, prisons, war, and mass surveillance to keep our communities strong and safe.

OUR AIM: Our aim is to bring an end to the new forced labor system, unjust sentencing laws, the theft of public monies from our communities, and white supremacist politics that hinder people from white, black, and other communities from working together for equality, freedom, and justice for all. We are committed to finding individuals and groups in the state, throughout the country and world to support organizing efforts to abolish the entire Prison-Industrial Slave Complex in Louisiana and beyond.

OUR VALUES: We operate on the principle that "you can get everything in life you want if you help enough other people get what they want," and that "people don't care how much you know until they understand how much you care."

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