

# Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants

Fall Newsletter

Fall 2023



*“When we all see justice, then we’ll all see peace” – Michael Franti*



*“The worst form of injustice is pretended Justice” - Plato*



## Who we are

Iowa CURE is part of an international organization with membership inside and outside prisons which seeks to bring together individuals concerned about the criminal justice system. We believe in a system based on humane treatment of prisoners and more reliance on alternatives to prisons. We work for reform of sentencing laws, quality legal aid for indigent criminal defendants, access to good medical and mental health treatment for prisoners and improvement in resources for integrating back into society.

## From Your President

Happy Harvest fellow members! I hope everyone is enjoying the beautiful weather before the arctic cold hits us this winter. You are probably wondering why your newsletter either came late, or early.

Iowa CURE has transitioned on when we will be sending your newsletters. Instead of getting your letter in January and mid-summer, you will be receiving your newsletters after the legislative sessions and around the time of our annual meeting in the fall. This transition was made because we want to ensure that everyone is getting updates on current legislation and end of end of year reviews from the annual meeting. Every transition comes with some hiccups. If you are one of our incarcerated members, and you do not receive your newsletter, please let us know. We have sent emails to family members requesting to monitor when you are receiving your newsletters. Some people have been getting them in a matter of days, others weeks. Please let us know if you do not receive your newsletter. 2024 is just around the corner. We look forward to another year of advocacy and criminal justice reform

***“It can be cruel, poetic or blind, but when denied it's violence you'll find.”***

Answer on page 4.

## Board of Iowa CURE

Wendy Wittrock – President

Sue Hutchins – Vice President

Richard Nordin – Treasurer

Peggy Aguilar

Eddie Bloomer

Mary Kay Dial

Carla Dawson

Heather Erwin

Jackie Robinson

Larry Smith

Carolyn Walker

Jean Basinger – Consultant



## Membership Meetings

Who are people in Iowa who are advocating for people in prisons and their families? Iowa CURE schedules several membership meetings each year, available in person and online, and we want to hear from people who help in our work. In September, we heard from Erica Nichols Cook, from the Wrongful Conviction Division of the Iowa State Public Defender Office, and who is the clinician in residence at the Drake University Law Center. On November 12 we will host, Mary Cohen, of the University of Iowa faculty, who will tell of the benefits of music to those in prison. She is the founder and director of the Oakdale Prison Community Choir). In 2010 she began the Songwriting Workshop at Oakdale Prison. Her research centers around how music education can be a tool for abolishing the prison industrial complex. Please tell us who you would like to have as a guest speaker in the future.

## 2024 Meetings

Future meetings will be announced online and members will receive and email. Meetings will be held at Trinity Los Americas.

Website: [www.iowacure.com](http://www.iowacure.com)

Email: [iowacure@gmail.com](mailto:iowacure@gmail.com)

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*Iowa CURE is an organization with members in and out of the prison system. We cannot offer legal services or accept phone calls from prisoners. Letters will be answered to the best of our ability. Do not send your legal documents. In joining Iowa CURE, you are NOT entering into a contract for services.*

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## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

### 2023 DUES NOTICE

Please remember to pay your 2023 Iowa CURE dues. Please fill out the information form below and mail it with your membership fee to Iowa CURE, P.O. Box 41005, Des Moines, IA 50311. You can also pay on our website [www.iowacure.com](http://www.iowacure.com).

Prisoners - \$2    Individual - \$10    Family - \$20    Sustaining - \$50    Life - \$100

Name/Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

*Why should I join CURE? Being a CURE member gives you access to experienced staff, reputable research, political action, community organization, leadership and strategy development as well as informative fact sheets, action alerts, legislative and issue updates. Please feel free to pass this newsletter to interested friends, family, associates and loved ones in prison.*



## **2023 International Conference Nairobi Kenya**

Pan Africa CURE hosted the 9th International CURE conference in Nairobi, with 95 participants representing 28 countries. Committed to criminal justice and prison reform based on prisoner and human rights, many were from Africa, and participants included prior detainees from 3 continents. Pan Africa CURE is committed to supporting, preparing and accepting prisoners as returning citizens, as reflected in its slogan: ‘We support rehabilitation of Prisoners and Advocate for Reforms in the Criminal Justice System because today’s prisoners are tomorrow’s neighbours.’ The lively exchange of information and networking between participants and Kenyas leading stakeholders was significant. In its 50th anniversary, this was a fitting landmark for International CURE and its founders. Charlie Sullivan was formally revered for CURE’s continuing and expanding global legacy for prison reform. We were overwhelmed with the response, which included countries like Pakistan from the right and Cuba from the left, commented Peter Onyango Olwal, the Coordinator of Pan Africa CURE. Its theme was to align the criminal justice system with the broader United Nations Sustainable Development Goals on rehabilitation. While continents varied in their immediate conditions and concerns, the participants shared core issues of socioeconomic disadvantage and human rights neglect and abuses. It is vital to reduce people unnecessarily being drawn into the vortex of entering the justice system and incarceration, ask ex/prisoners what would be beneficial to reduce recidivism and use evidence-based research to direct funding, especially community-based support. Critical factors to reducing recidivism were to provide preferred alternatives to avert the large proportion of detainees accused of minor or non-violent offences entering the justice system particularly the use of Restorative Justice; for prisoners with meaningful opportunities in preparation for their release; to bring into prisons psychological support and other services that address issues to facilitate community safety by addressing unresolved problems that led to incarceration; and to reorient away from the very costly neoliberal industrial complex expansion and instead to reinvest in community-based supports during and after incarceration.





## Keep Families Connected Act

People incarcerated in California state prisons, as well as those held in state and local juvenile detention facilities, will be able to make and receive phone calls free of charge beginning January 1, 2023, after SB1008 (Becker) was signed into law by Gavin Newsom.



## Iowa Justice Action Network

IJAN held their annual conference on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The conference focused on the movement to reform youth justice: Getting Iowa on board. The conference focused on the national movement to reform youth justice, including special focus on reducing youth incarceration. Participants learned about more just and effective approaches to youth justice and how they might be applied to our situation in Iowa. Keynote Speaker Josh Rovner, Director of Youth Justice with The Sentencing Project, along with a panels of local experts on youth justice, presented ways can collectively make an impact.

## Family Support Group Builds Network for Advocacy

Help us build a network of family members of those incarcerated in Iowa prisons. While loved ones outside face unusual frustrations and isolation, they can find encouragement and practical help in dealing with the system when they communicate with each other. In January, Iowa CURE launched an online Family Support group. Those who participate have found help and support and have become skilled advocates for their loved ones. Sue Hutchins, Iowa CURE vice president, facilitates the group, which meets several times a month, on Saturday mornings alternating with Tuesday evenings. Members share tips on what has worked for them, and have sympathetic listeners to their stories. They can join on Zoom or by telephone. We need your family members to be part of this network so we can all be more effective in advocating for you. Please ask them to email [iowacure@gmail.com](mailto:iowacure@gmail.com) to join. We ask that they send their name, hometown, email address, and which prison they visit or would like to visit. To those who register, we will send regular reminders of meetings, so they can join as they are able. Also, we will send them contacts of others who have provided the same information. Some 17 different people have taken part in meetings so far, and the most meetings have between 5 and 7 members. Meetings are confidential and participants can share or just listen.

## Prison Policy Initiative Update

According to research by the Prison Policy Initiative, releases by parole were down 41% in 2022 compared with A 2019. Also there were 16% fewer parole hearings for the same period. In fact, with the exception of South Dakota, every state for which data was provided released fewer people through discretionary parole in 2022 than 2019, with an average overall decline of around 41% people fewer people released per state.

***Booker Introduces Package of Bills to End Unfair and Abusive Labor Practices in U.S. Correctional Facilities***

Senator Booker has introduced a package of bills that would end cruel labor practices in U.S. prisons, plus tackle fair pay and workplace discrimination on behalf of incarcerated individuals. New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker has introduced a package of bills that would end cruel labor practices in U.S. prisons and tackle fair pay and workplace discrimination on behalf of incarcerated individuals. In a statement obtained by the Grio, Booker proposed that the four bills — the Fair Wages for Incarcerated Workers Act of 2023, Correctional Facilities Occupational Safety and Health Act, Ensuring Work Opportunities in Correctional Facilities Act and Combating Workplace Discrimination in Correctional Facilities Act — would address “inhumane and unacceptable” prison labor conditions in America’s correctional facilities. The Democratic senator believes these bills would end unfair and abusive labor policies

*S 508 - Ensuring Work Opportunities in Correctional Facilities Act* - To authorize appropriations for occupational education and training programs of the Bureau of Prisons, and for other purposes.

*S 516 - Fair Wages for Incarcerated Workers Act of 2023* - To require coverage of incarcerated workers under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, and for other purposes.

*S 517 - Combating Workplace Discrimination in Correctional Facilities Act* - This bill provides certain rights and protections for prisoners who refuse to or do not work while in prison.

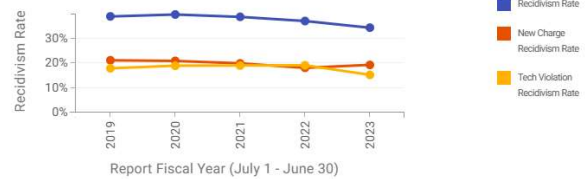
Specifically, the bill prohibits the Department of Justice from requiring a prisoner to participate in a work program. Additionally, the bill allows a prisoner to file a civil rights lawsuit under federal law without first exhausting all administrative remedies. Currently, a prisoner must exhaust all administrative remedies before filing such a lawsuit. The bill prohibits any retaliation against a prisoner for refusal to work. It also prohibits the Bureau of Prisons from disciplining a prisoner for refusal to work. Finally, the bill extends other federal statutory protections to prisoners by (1) including correctional facilities as covered employers and prisoners as covered employees under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with respect to employment-related discrimination against imprisoned workers, and (2) requiring correctional facilities to implement certain policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

*S 518 - Correctional Facilities Occupational Safety and Health Act* - This bill extends federal workplace safety and health protections to incarcerated workers.

and (2) perform work offered or required by the correctional facility, such as prison work programs or work release programs. States and territories that enforce their own workplace safety and health laws and standards under a plan approved by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration must include workplace protections for incarcerated workers in the plan. In addition, the Department of Labor must establish a grant program to assist states with amending their occupational safety and health laws to cover incarcerated workers and with enforcing those laws. Furthermore, the Bureau of Prisons must ensure that its workplace safety and health program apply to incarcerated workers in the same manner as it applies to employees of the bureau. Additionally, states and localities that participate in the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program must have workplace safety and health protections for incarcerated workers that are appropriately monitored and enforced. The bill reserves a portion of the grants for recipients to use to set up workplace safety and health protections for incarcerated workers. The bill also requires periodic reports to Congress and the Department of Justice about the workplace and safety conditions at



Prison Recidivism by Fiscal Year  
% of individuals reincarcerated within three years of release.



Prison Recidivism

34.3%

## Racial disparity in Iowa corrections system 7th highest in the nation

Conner Hendricks Sept 29, 2023

Only 4% of Iowans are Black, but Black Iowans make up 25% of people in prisons and jails according to data from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics. The Prison Policy Initiative ranks Iowa's racial disparity in the corrections system as seventh highest in the nation. The Hawkeye State's incarceration rate is two and a half times higher than Canada and the United Kingdom's combined. Veronica Fowler with the ACLU of Iowa says the state locks too many people up.

"Iowa, like most other states, has a mass incarceration problem. We tend to lock up people for reasons that have very little to do with public safety and have everything to do with just being punitive," Fowler said. New data from the Prison Policy Initiative shows Black Iowans are incarcerated at a rate 9 times higher than white Iowans

"This study shows once again that the cards are stacked against black people in our legal system every step of the way and again systemic racism has become like kind of a dog whistle term, but it really does mean something," Fowler said. A bill proposed by Governor Kim Reynolds to ban racial profiling by law enforcement has failed to pass the legislature twice.

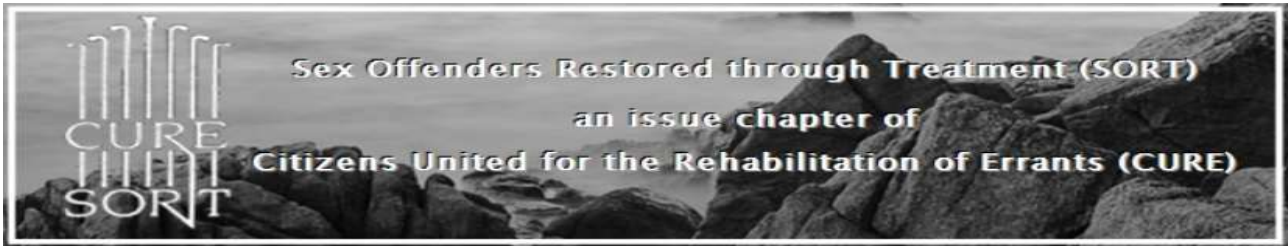
Fowler says mass incarceration has many societal impacts. "These are people who are being removed from their children, their families, and it has a huge individual cost as well," Fowler said. Fowler says the justice system doesn't just disadvantage people based on skin color - it also disadvantages poor people.

"If you have money, you or your family can get you a good lawyer. You're gonna spend less time in jail or prison than if you don't have those things, and that's that's not any way to administer judge Justice," Fowler said. Fowler says one step state leaders could take is to treat people with addiction rather than punishment, noting it's cheaper than incarceration.

### We Hear You

Iowa CURE is actively working on advocating for air conditioning to be installed at Anamosa State Penitentiary and Mount Pleasant. Please have your family and friends sign our petition online at

[www.change.org/p/install-air-conditioning-in-anamosa-state-penitentiary-and-mount-pleasant-correctional-facility](http://www.change.org/p/install-air-conditioning-in-anamosa-state-penitentiary-and-mount-pleasant-correctional-facility)



**Sex Offenders Restored through Treatment (SORT)**, a non-profit advocacy membership organization under IRC section 501(c)(3) founded in 1990, is an issue chapter of **Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants (National CURE)** and is referred to as CURE-SORT. CURE-SORT works to provide information, resources, contacts, and support to individuals, families, defense attorneys, treatment providers, public media, legislators, law enforcement personnel, and other professionals who work with or are interested in issues of sexual abuse and its prevention. While you will see the term "sex offender" used through out this site, we at CURE-SORT when possible, will refer to individuals as someone who has demonstrated "inappropriate sexual behavior" or someone who has demonstrated "illegal sexual behavior." Our reasons for doing so are because:

- We are trying to assist those whose behavior, while inappropriate has not caused them to perform an illegal act, as well as those who have committed an illegal act of sexual behavior;
- By helping individuals who display inappropriate behavior gain awareness of their problem and seek assistance, and assist those who have already been found guilty of committing an illegal act of sexual behavior control and manage their behavior, we prevent the potential of illegal sexual behavior; and
- The term "sex offender" has become a label associated with individuals who demonstrate a specific type of illegal sexual behavior and does not adequately recognize the diversity of individuals looking to manage their illegal sexual behavior. You may download our position paper on the subject of use and abuse of the term "sex offender". [Here](#).

Our outreach efforts seek to promote restoration of people who have demonstrated illegal sexual behavior and we look to establish alternatives to incarceration. It is also to foster a sense of community, responsibility, and concern between individuals who have offended through correspondence with people incarcerated for illegal sexual behavior. We also publish a newsletter called the CURE-SORT News.

CURE-SORT was formerly organized as a program of Sex Abuse Treatment Alliance (SATA) and known as SATA-SORT.

Website: [www.cure-sort.org](http://www.cure-sort.org)

For those wishing to correspond via mail:  
Wayne Bowers, Executive Director  
CURE-SORT  
P.O. Box 1022  
Norman, OK 73070-1022  
(405) 639-7262

Did you know?  
Over 2.7 million children in the United States have a parent behind bars.  
There are more jails than colleges in the United States



# The Marshall Project

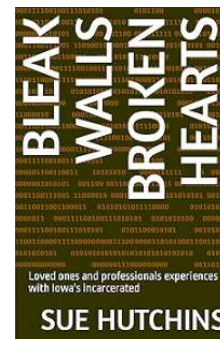
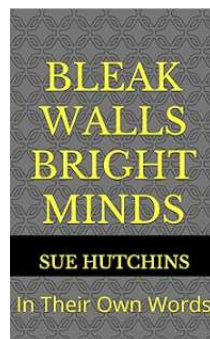
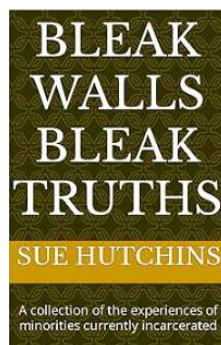
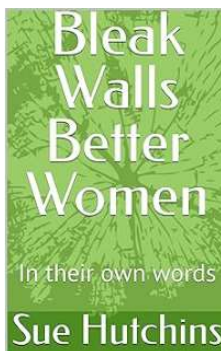
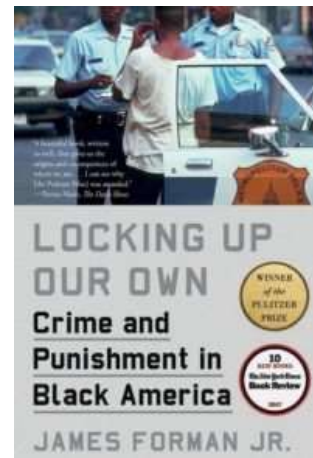
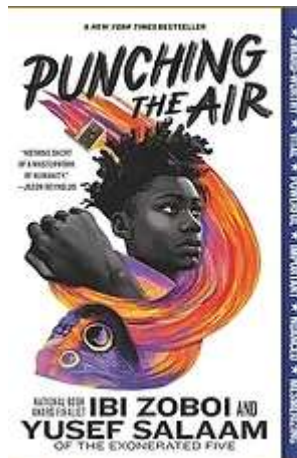
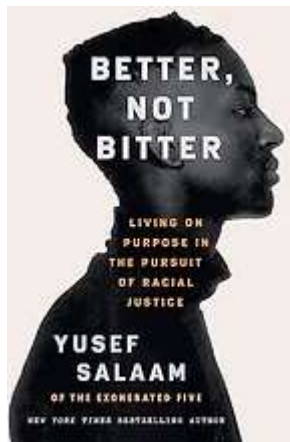
## Many Prisons Restrict Books to Stop Drug Smuggling. Critics Say It Does Not Work.

*Battling an overdose crisis, more prisoners are blocking books based on the sender or packaging. Free speech advocates call it a de facto book ban.- The Marshall project Shannon Heffernan and Andrew Rodriguez.*

[www.themarshallproject.org](http://www.themarshallproject.org) We encourage our members to read an article published by the Marshall Project about the situation with books being banned. Please read the article online at [www.themarshallproject.org/2023/10/18/prison-drugs-overdoses-book-banning](http://www.themarshallproject.org/2023/10/18/prison-drugs-overdoses-book-banning)

### Books of Interest

All of these books can be purchased on Amazon.com







## **The voice of our members**

At Newton Correctional Facility, there are an estimated 100 - 200 incarcerated-people who have done everything necessary to go before the parole board, and be considered for release. These people have served their minimum (and beyond) time, they have paid their restitution, they have completed the treatment program, and they are otherwise ready for release. The Multidisciplinary Team (MDT), appointed by the DOC, has been systematically forwarding an estimated 80% of these cases to the Attorney General's office for "further review" and possible prosecution for civil commitment.

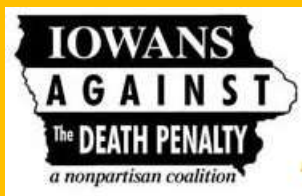
The wait-time to be reviewed by the Attorney General is YEARS. One man's wait is 7 years, another man's wait is 13 years. This is because the AG is using people's TDD date, and not reviewing people until 90 days prior to discharge. In short, the AG is enforcing a minimum-maximum which forces people to remain incarcerated and do all of their time even when they were sentenced to doing 70% or 80% of their time.

Among other things, this is an effort to "keep beds full". A consequence is that it is overcrowding Iowan prisons. If the guys at Newton Correctional do not get released in a timely fashion, other incarcerated-individuals, at other Iowan prisons, cannot come to Newton to do the treatment that they need to do in order to be eligible for release. So, the MDT referrals to the AG not only cause overcrowding, they also make it impossible for incarcerated-people in the rest of the state to get to Newton to do the treatment that needs to be done.

What can you do? Call the governor's office at 515-281-5211 and express your concern that the MDT (a team appointed by the DOC) is causing Iowan prison to be over-crowded, and the MDT is referring far too many cases (about 80%) to the AG's office.

We want our tax dollars to be spent on education and rehabilitation in the prisons, not punishment!

## Iowans Against the Death Penalty



Did you know?

195 innocent people have been released and exonerated from death row.

For the past several years legislation has been presented in Iowa to return the death penalty. In 2024 Iowa elected a new state attorney. It is unknown on their position with capital punishment. Iowans Against the Death Penalty has been active since 1962. Iowa abolished the death penalty in 1965. Iowans Against the Death Penalty (IADP) is an independent, non-partisan, non-sectarian, grass-roots organization committed to preventing reinstatement of the death penalty in Iowa through public education and political activism. If you are interested in having the group speak at a conference or any other event, please email [info@iowansagainstthedeathpenalty.com](mailto:info@iowansagainstthedeathpenalty.com). If you would like to become a member, or make a donation for the cause, please see their website at [www.iowansagainstthedeathpenalty.org](http://www.iowansagainstthedeathpenalty.org). Please also call up you local and state representatives to inquire their postion on the death penalty.

### November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 11th Annual Summit on Justice & Disparities

The Iowa Summit on Justice & Disparities through workshops, power panels and plenary sessions included awareness, training, networking, and action steps around the following subject matter areas:

Strategies for Systemic Criminal Justice Reform, Addressing Iowa's Highly Disparate Justice Statistics, Addressing Juvenile Justice Inequities Building Community - Law Enforcement Relationships, Eliminating Racial Profiling

Recruiting and Hiring Diverse Law Enforcement Officers, Implicit Bias in the Justice System

Juvenile Justice Best Practices, City & County Ordinances, Re-examining Cash Bail Bonds

Fair Chance Employment - "Ban the Box", Court Fines and Fees, School to Prison Pipeline

Bi-Partisan Reform Efforts, Successful Re-entry, Exploring Cries For Policing Reform, Minority Impact Laws



In 1989, at just fifteen years young, Dr. Yusef Salaam was tried and convicted in the “Central Park Jogger” case along with four other Black and Latinx young men. The Exonerated Five spent between seven to 13 years behind bars for crimes they did not commit, until their sentences were overturned in 2002. Since then, they have received a multi-million dollar settlement from the city of New York for its injustice and have been profiled in award-winning films, including The Central Park Five documentary from Ken Burns, Sarah Burns and David McMahon and most recently the Emmy award-winning Netflix limited series When They See Us, written and directed by Ava DuVernay. Over the past two decades, Yusef has become a family man, father, poet, activist and inspirational speaker. He continues to utilize his platform to share his story with others and educate the public about the impact of mass incarceration and police brutality rooted in our justice system. He regularly advocates for criminal justice reform, prison reform and the abolition of juvenile solitary confinement and capital punishment, specifically restoring “humanity” of those incarcerated and those trodden down by the spike wheels of justice. Yusef is the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from President Barack Obama (2016) and more recently has shared his story and stance on current issues on CNN, MSNBC, REVOLT TV, NPR Atlanta, FOX and more.