Who is Initiate Justice?

Initiate Justice is an organization led by people whose lives have been impacted by the California prison system - people who are currently inside, formerly incarcerated, or those who have loved ones inside. We organize, advocate, and build together. We work to make statewide policy change, build relationships with state senators and assemblymembers, and build the world we want to live in. We are 45,000+ Inside Members (like you!), 300+ Inside Organizers, 200+ Outside Organizers, and members and volunteers across California.

Get your loved ones involved, too!

On the first Wednesday of every month, at 6:30PM PST, we host virtual community meetings, via Zoom. This is a great opportunity to see what legislative actions we're encouraging, to get connected with volunteer opportunities, and to be introduced to special guests and exciting projects. We invite your loved ones to attend and see what we’ve been up to and learn how they can support our work on the outside! All are welcome.

Live Policy Corner on the outside!

Did you know we also have a Policy Corner for people on the outside? Once a month, our Policy Director, Greg, hosts a live Policy Corner on Instagram! During these lives, Greg announces the most up-to-date information regarding our legislative package and other important Criminal Justice bills! Folks also get the chance to ask general questions regarding our bills as the live is happening.

Notify your loved ones to join our Instagram Policy Lives so they are up-to-date with our legislation!

We can be found at: www.Instagram.com/InitiateJustice

Kindly note: We do not answer legal questions or questions on any specific case.
It's only the middle of the year, and we already have some wins we want to share with you all!

Since January, we have:

- We began selling tshirt, prints, and postcard bundles featuring art from The ART Gallery!
- Our Executive Director was a panelist for 4 events!
- Graduated 20+ new participants of our Institute of Impacted Leaders Program for a total of 280+ Outside Organizers!
- Held 6 workshops across various CA prisons!
- Passed 5 bills out of their House of Origin (we’re halfway through the process!)
- We were finalists for the People’s Choice Podcast Awards!

This work is hard, but it’s important we celebrate all of our wins, big or small!

What’s a “Me too”?
In April, Initiate Justice staff, members, and Outside Organizers traveled to the California State Capitol to give “me toos” in support of ACA 4 (Bryan). When you want to show support or opposition for a legislative bill, it’s important and impactful to give your “me too” so legislators know how many people support or oppose the bill. “Me toos” are typically short and to the point and can be given in both in person or via the phone.

For example, during the Assembly Elections Committee, supporters went up to the stand and said “My name is [stated their name] in strong support of ACA 4 (Bryan). Thank you.” During the Elections Committee, there were over 10 organizations and 50+ organizers in attendance! ACA 4 (Bryan) passed the Elections Committee and is set to be heard on the Assembly floor in the coming months!

Check out page 5 to learn more about ACA 4 (Bryan)!

Initiate Justice Staff
Crystal and Greg,
Former Inside Organizers
Roberto and Carlos,
and our community partner from Ella Baker Center, Than.

Lobby Day for ACA 4 (Bryan)!

After the Assembly Elections Committee Hearing, organizers met with various legislative offices asking them to support ACA 4 (Bryan) and answered any questions or concerns they had regarding ACA 4 (Bryan) - these are called lobby visits.

During the lobby visits, organizers were also given the opportunity to share their personal testimonies on how ACA 4 (Bryan) would positively impact themselves and their incarcerated loved ones’ lives.

One group was told by a legislative staffer that this was the first time they had been able to hear directly from people who would be directly impacted by ACA 4 (Bryan) - leaving meaningful stories they’ll share with the Assemblymembers!

Don’t forget to give your written “me too” by submitting your Legislative Letter of Support for ACA 4 (Bryan)!

And that’s a wrap on Season 3 of abolition is for everybody!

At Initiate Justice, we think it is important to contribute to culture-shifting work. Meaning, being present and contributing to the conversations that shape the way we think of those who are impacted by our criminal legal system, which is why we started abolition is for everybody (AIFE) in 2021.

On Season 3 of AIFE, we talked about the media’s involvement in carceral or abolitionist thinking and how it uses narratives to impact, radicalize, and shift culture.

We decided it was important for us to specifically focus on the media for season 3 since it’s the biggest contributor to the way our current narratives on the criminal legal system in the U.S. are represented. Every season, episode, minisode, and social media post is carefully crafted to best represent people like us.

AIFE is available on all streaming platforms and transcripts of the episodes are available on our website: www.InitiateJustice.org/Podcast

“The language that the media uses to describe what people do affects how we think about those people and about the causes that they’re fighting for.”

-Alec Karakasanis, Season 3, Episode 7
We had a great time during our Volunteer Night for graduates of our Institute of Impacted Leaders program! We were able to come together as a community to sort and gather hundreds of Legislative Letters of Support that you all mailed in for ACA 4 (Bryan)!

Outside Organizers and staff were thrilled with the amount of letters we have gathered thus far! Our Policy Team will now be able to take those letters and present them to Senators, Assemblymembers, and the California Governor to show the tremendous support ACA 4 (Bryan) is receiving and the impact it will have in our communities!

Wellness Corner: Let’s celebrate your wins!

We understand the impacts incarceration has on all of us and how it can sometimes be a little difficult to remain hopeful and celebrate ourselves–we encourage you to recognize even your tiniest of wins!

Write three wins you’ve had so far that you want to celebrate–big or small!

Volunteer Night: Gathering your letters!

We had a great time during our Volunteer Night for graduates of our Institute of Impacted Leaders program! We were able to come together as a community to sort and gather hundreds of Legislative Letters of Support that you all mailed in for ACA 4 (Bryan)!

Outside Organizers and staff were thrilled with the amount of letters we have gathered thus far! Our Policy Team will now be able to take those letters and present them to Senators, Assemblymembers, and the California Governor to show the tremendous support ACA 4 (Bryan) is receiving and the impact it will have in our communities!

What is Transformative Justice?

When there is harm or conflict in a community, instead of being punished or going to prison, everyone works together to figure out what went wrong and how to make it better. It’s about finding ways to find the problem and make sure it doesn’t happen again, while also making sure everyone is heard and respected. We work together to create a better outcome for everyone involved. This is Transformative Justice (TJ).

TJ does not ignore the need for individual responsibility or accountability in an abolitionist world. Instead, we acknowledge that addressing the root causes that lead people to cause harm are crucial to reducing harm. **We recognize that it’s necessary to deeply shift our mindsets away from the idea of resources being earned, and to understand that meeting the basic needs of everyone through systemic resources is the right of all people.**

Note: TJ has been practiced for many years by Black women, Indigenous people, disabled people, sex workers who experience assault, survivors of violence, LGBTQ and other gender non-conforming folks.

Transformative Justice (n): a decriminalized social and interpersonal strategy for responding to harm and conflict in community.

How To Submit Your Art to Initiate Justice

1. Mail your work to our P.O. Box and write “Attn: Artwork”
2. Do not send anything you need back. **We cannot send anything back.**

By mailing in artwork, addressed to Attn: Artwork, you are giving Initiate Justice permission to use your material in whatever way most benefits the movement. Usually, this means participation in The Inside Journal or inclusion in social media or fundraising efforts.

“This event was impactful and grounding. It made me feel connected to every single person who sent in a letter!”

-Michelle C., Outside Organizer
Exciting news on The ART Gallery!

Last year, we launched The ART Gallery where we featured 11 artists who are incarcerated throughout California prisons and we are so excited to announce that this year, we will be launching the 2023 gallery featuring 6 more artists!

The ART Gallery not only highlights how art is a form of activism (artivism), but it amplifies the lives and experiences of those impacted by the carceral system.

People on the outside are able to purchase tshirts, prints, and postcards with the artwork! All proceeds from the gallery go directly towards Initiate Justice and the artists. If you would like your loved ones to check out last year and this year’s art and shop items, they can do so on our website and social media accounts.

Congratulations to the 6 selected artists for 2023. We’re grateful for your participation in this activism and fundraising effort and are so excited for everybody to see what you’ve created! Stay tuned for the artwork photos.

Artwork from our Inside Members

David G.

Christopher R.

Ronnie L.

Schedule Reminder: Your next issue of The Inside Journal will be sent to the printer in mid September and it typically takes about three weeks to reach you after it has been printed. We thank you for your continued patience, support, and advocacy efforts!
This bill will allow a person who was convicted of firearm enhancements (Penal Code sections 12022.5 or 12022.53) to petition the court for resentencing. The bill will require the court to have a presumption in favor of resentencing, which may only be overcome if a court finds the defendant is an unreasonable risk of danger to public safety. The bill will also require the court to appoint counsel for the hearing. A previous bill, SB 620 (Bradford) allowed judges to strike enhancements at sentencing, but it was not retroactive. This bill is trying to make it fully retroactive.

AB 1310 passed the Assembly and is now in the Senate.

The Equal Chance Act

This constitutional amendment will allow currently incarcerated people in California prisons to vote. If the constitutional amendment passes the Legislature, it will then be sent to the voters to decide on the November 2024 ballot.

ACA 4 passed the Assembly Elections committee in April and is currently pending a vote on the Assembly floor. The constitutional amendment needs to pass by Summer of 2024 to qualify for the ballot.

Keep in Mind! Constitutional Amendments, like ACA 4 (Bryan), do not follow the same Legislative Calendar as Assembly and Senate Bills!

This bill will replace youth restitution with a more sustainable and accessible system of compensation for crime survivors by ensuring timely payments from the California Victim Compensation Board while holding youth accountable in appropriate ways that do not involve them paying money. Instead, youth will participate in restorative justice conferences, perform community service, or be connected to job opportunities.

AB 1186 passed the Assembly and is now in the Senate.

AB 544 will be a two-year bill, meaning it won’t move forward until 2024.

This team introduces and pushes our bills forward!

Initiate Justice’s Policy Analyst, Sarah, and Policy Director, Greg, at the California State Capitol.

Note: The bolded sections in Policy Corner are updates on the bills from the last issue of The Inside Journal.

Reference your copy of the Legislative Process to know where we are in the process and where we are heading to next!

Still have questions or don’t have a copy? Reach out to an Inside Organizer in your yard/building for help!
Because of the passing of Proposition 17, eligible Californians on parole can now vote! Don’t forget to register if you are eligible.

You can call the voter hotline at 1-800-345-VOTE (8683) to have a voter register card mailed to you or register online at www.RegisterToVote.ca.gov

Make your voice heard!

---

**NEW LEGISLATION!**

**AB 1118 (Kalra): Racial Justice Act 3.0**

This bill will make technical changes to the Racial Justice Act and ensure implementation is streamlined for all currently incarcerated people.

- First, it allows people in prison to raise a claim while their case is already being reviewed on direct appeal, instead of starting over with a new petition.
- Second, it allows folks on death row to bring their claim to the trial court instead of waiting a decade for the death penalty appeals process.
- Lastly, it clarifies that you can bring a claim if your case isn’t set for trial.

**AB 1118 passed the Assembly and is now in the Senate.**

**NEW LEGISLATION!**

**AB 581 (Carrillo): The PATH Act**

This bill will standardize the clearance process for program providers to enter prisons.

**AB 581 passed the Assembly and is now in the Senate.**

**Coming home soon?**

**AB 60 (Bryan): Restorative Justice**

This bill will notify victims of available restorative justice programs in their counties.

**AB 60 passed the Assembly and is now in the Senate.**

---

**INITIATE JUSTICE**

Attn: Letter of Support
P.O. Box 15836
Los Angeles, CA 90015

Reminder: When sending us your Legislative Letters of Support for ACA 4 (Bryan), be sure to address your envelope like this, with nothing else in it, so we process them faster!

Our Executive Director, Antoinette, speaking as a panelist on the California Budget & Policy Center’s 2023 Policy Insights event in Sacramento!