

October 2023 Edition

# the inside journal



*The Inside Journal* shares news about California state laws, CDCR policies, and campaigns pushing for prison abolition; as well as stories and art gathered from Initiate Justice's Inside Members. **In 2023, the journal will be sent to the printer in late February, late May, mid September, and mid October. It takes about three weeks to reach you after it's sent to the printer.**

## 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.

## What's inside?

- **Become an Inside Organizer with Initiate Justice – Pg 2**
- **Coming home soon? Register to vote! – Pg 3**
- **Outcome of IJ's legislative bills & other criminal justice reform bills– Pg 5 & 6**

## We'll be right back!

Over the course of the next few months, we will be strategizing, planning, and rejuvenating for 2024! We ask that you please be patient with us and hang tight as we gear up for another year in advocating and organizing for our collective freedom.

**We can't wait to return in the new year and share what we're going to be working on!**

**–The Initiate Justice Team**



## See you in 2024!

## ! Your next Journal will arrive in March 2024!

- We receive thousands of letters every few months, please be patient with responses to mail.
- If you send us multiple letters asking for a response, it takes us longer to get any answer back to you. We still have to sort, read, and write to duplicated letters.
- Please write as clearly as possible on new member sign up sheets and letters to us so that our staff and volunteers can read it.
- Sign up yourself or another person to receive this journal! You'll know you've been successfully added to the list when you receive the March 2024 Journal.
- Please use our "Attns" when writing to us. See page 2 for details.

### INITIATE JUSTICE MAILING ADDRESS

PO BOX 15836  
Los Angeles, CA 90015

### WEBSITE

[www.InitiateJustice.org](http://www.InitiateJustice.org)

### EMAIL

[info@InitiateJustice.org](mailto:info@InitiateJustice.org)

### Social Media

[facebook.com/InitiateJustice](https://facebook.com/InitiateJustice)  
[instagram.com/InitiateJustice](https://instagram.com/InitiateJustice)  
[tiktok.com/InitiateJustice](https://tiktok.com/InitiateJustice)

# Become an Inside Organizer!

The Inside Organizing (IO) program is a grassroots organizing opportunity to become civically engaged with Initiate Justice. Join us!

## Here are some things we've accomplished with Inside Organizers so far:

- 380+ have completed the curriculum and become IOs advocating for you!
- Conducted 20+ civic engagement workshops
- Submitted thousands of Legislative Letters of Support

## Here are some things you will get out of becoming an Inside Organizer:

- A Letter of Support and Certificate upon completion of Step 3
- A monthly newsletter with IJ updates and calls to action
- Direct communication with Adam and Lee

**Kindly note:** This is a general overview of the IO process with estimated time frames, you will receive more details and support from us at every step of the way.



Our Inside Organizing team, Lee and Adam, with our community partner Danica at the Capitol during a Lobby Visit!

Below are the steps you need to take in order become an **Inside Organizer** and what you should expect from us!



## INITIATE JUSTICE

Attn: Inside Organizing  
P.O. Box 15836  
Los Angeles, CA 90015

### 1 Letter of Interest:

Send us a letter expressing interest in the IO program.

- After you've mailed this, you will hear from us in about 1 month.

### 2 Welcome Letter & Call to Action:

After we receive your letter expressing interest, we will send you a welcome letter with a call to action.

- Once you complete this & write to us, you will hear from us in about 1 month regarding next steps.

### 3 Curriculum:

You'll receive a correspondence curriculum that teaches you about the legislative process, inclusion, and fairness.

- This step takes as long as you need. Once you have completed the curriculum & mailed it to us, we will need time to review it- please hang tight!

### 4 Phone Training:

After you have completed the curriculum and action items you will receive with the newsletter, Adam and Lee will check in with you regarding phone training!

- The length of this step is worked out between yourself and the IO team.

## We appreciate you!

Thank you for using "ATTN" on your envelopes to us. ***It helps us process your letter faster!***

For artwork submissions:

**Attn: Artwork**

For New Member Sign Ups:

**Attn: New Members**

For Inside Organizers:

**Attn: Inside Organizing**



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Members of the Initiate Justice team before a workshop in San Quentin!

## Coming home soon? Register to vote!

When we vote, we are voting for propositions and measures that will best serve our communities. We are also voting for leaders that best represent us in the State, County, Local and Judiciary levels. Voting has a meaningful impact in our communities. This is why Initiate Justice passed Proposition 17 in 2020, and restored the voting rights of more than 51, 000 Californians on parole and are currently working to restore the voting rights of incarcerated Californians through ACA 4 (Bryan).

"I am grateful to have my right to vote back after it was taken away during my incarceration. I now take voting very seriously. I do the research, I ask the questions, and I vote for who I believe is going to represent me to the best of their ability. I make sure I am very intentional on who and what I support on my ballot."

**-Adrianna G.**  
**Statewide Advocacy Manager, Initiate Justice**



Adrianna (left) with  
Outside Organizer Genevieve S. (right)!

## Thank you, translators!

Thank you to our amazing group of 12 volunteers who have helped us translate all 11 editions of *The Inside Journal*— **that's over 66 pages worth of translated information!**

Because of them, thousands of incarcerated people throughout the state of California have received vital updates and information about our work.

We could not have done this without them!

Thank you!

**Who is eligible to vote? To register to vote in California, you must be:**

- A United States citizen and a resident of California,
- 18 years old or older on Election Day,
- Not currently serving a state or federal prison term for the conviction of a felony, and
- Not currently found mentally incompetent to vote by a court.

**When you come home, we encourage you to register to vote by visiting:**

**[www.RegisterToVote.ca.gov](http://www.RegisterToVote.ca.gov) or by calling the voter hotline at 1-800-345-VOTE (8683)**

It is important for those of us who have been impacted by incarceration to stay informed and involved in our democracy so that our voices are heard! #DemocracyNeedsEveryone

## Wellness Corner: Word Search!

Z T D W I Y H D V I U A E Z I E E W I B  
B H I K F O V I M N H M T E Y D W E Q F  
P H N G H I H N R T Y E H L W U E Z F R  
O I I T J N U N D E I N E F G E L X G I  
L T T H C S K W V R B D A F M P L Y F N  
I D I E S I L N G S V M R R U B N Q N B  
C E A I I D W R N E O E T O U A E L M J  
Y Q T N K E D E N C T N G P N C S Z P J  
C G E S Y O X T Y T I T A A V U S R X F  
O P J I G R N R T I N S L B G P C U A A  
R E U D M G K O V O G R L O T W O G J X  
N R S E E A Z A N N T Q E L X C R W G K  
E V T J T N J C Q A H W R I K G N R X A  
R M I O O I O T V L V U Y T T F E E F A  
E X C U O Z A I C I I F S I I R R Z E C  
R M E R C I J V K T C D L O B R D Y H W  
R X Q N E N N I H Y J W G N N E W M X K  
Y Q Q A Y G V T X W B T T S V H N E P W  
L J F L H M V Y N J J T R H A P Q U K F  
H M I R Z F M H D F Y Z G C D F T O V R

Initiate Justice  
Retroactivity  
Intersectionality  
The ART Gallery

Me Too  
Wellness Corner  
*The Inside Journal*  
Amendments

Abolition  
Policy Corner  
Inside Organizing  
Voting



## Artwork from our Inside Members



Spoon J.



Miguel D.

### 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.

Initiate Justice is here to help you build your political power, with the goal of helping you and everyone inside come home and to create a new society based on true justice.

One part of justice is consent - that people should have the choice to agree to engage in a conversation or activity voluntarily. Initiate Justice receives many amazing letters from you, our Inside Members, but we have also been receiving letters with lewd, sexual, or romantic content directed towards our staff, our Outside Organizers, and our Outside Members and volunteers. All the photos in the Inside Journal are meant to build community with you as a member, but people engaging in IJ's work on the outside are not part of IJ in order to penpal or start a romantic relationship. We ask that you please keep your letters on topic to your liberation, power building, education, and political issues, and not romance or sexual comments. Thank you.



Jose F.

# policy corner

## SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR!

### 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.

**Update: AB 1118 (Kalra) was signed by the Governor on October 9, 2023 and the bill will go into effect on January 1, 2024.**

## SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR!

### AB 60 (Bryan): Restorative Justice

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

**Update: AB 60 (Bryan) was signed by the Governor on October 9, 2023 and the bill will go into effect on January 1, 2024.**

## TWO-YEAR BILL

### AB 544 (Bryan): Voting in Jail

This bill will establish polling centers in county jails and require county jails to provide voter registration forms to eligible incarcerated voters.

**Update: AB 544 is a two-year bill and won't move forward until 2024.**

## SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR!

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

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

**Update: AB 581 (Carrillo) was signed by the Governor on October 8, 2023 and the bill will go into effect on January 1, 2024.**

## TWO-YEAR BILL

### AB 1186 (Bonta): Youth Restitution

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.

**Update: On September 6, 2023 AB 1186 (Bonta) was strategically held by the author as a two-year bill on the Senate Floor. The bill won't move forward until 2024. We are grateful to the author for her continued commitment to this important issue.**

## PASSED ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

### ACA 4 (Bryan): Voting Rights in Prison

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.

**Update: 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.**

# policy corner

## HELD

### **AB 1310 (McKinnor): Equal Chance Act**

This bill will allow a person who was convicted of firearm enhancements (Penal Code sections 12022.5 or 12022.53) to be resentenced. Under AB 1310 (McKinnor), CDCR will identify people in custody who have a firearm enhancement and send that list to courts to recall people for resentencing hearings. 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.

**Update: AB 1310 (McKinnor) was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee on September 1, 2023. It will not be moving forward. We are still in the process of determining next steps. We fully understand the impact that gun enhancements have on our incarcerated community and remain committed to the long-term vision of ending gun enhancements in California. We will continue to fight.**

## OTHER IMPORTANT CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM BILLS

THE FOLLOWING BILLS ARE NOT BEING SPONSORED BY INITIATE JUSTICE BUT COULD MATERIALLY IMPACT THE LIVES OF INCARCERATED PEOPLE. WE ARE NOT SPONSORS OF THESE BILLS AND DO NOT HAVE MORE INFORMATION, SO PLEASE DO NOT WRITE TO US FOR DETAILS. THANK YOU!

- **AB 600 (Ting):** This bill will clarify the process and judicial authority for resentencing cases. A key change in the bill is that it will allow judges to re-open cases for resentencing consideration on their own authority. Currently, resentencing cases can only be started by District Attorneys, CDCR, BPH or the Attorney General in cases they originally prosecuted. Importantly, just like with all other resentencing cases, incarcerated people and their attorneys are not able to directly petition the court for relief. The bill includes language that this right does not exist and that if requests are directed to courts, the court has no obligation to respond. Because of this, many people have questions about how they may be able to get relief under this new law— in short, AB 600 requires no action on the part of incarcerated people or their counsel in order to get relief. We anticipate that relief under the bill will likely flow from cases being before judges by other means and in a small category of cases where a judge believes it to be in the interest of justice and no risk to public safety. **The Governor signed the bill on October 7, 2023 and the bill will go into effect on January 1, 2024.**
- **SB 474 (Becker):** This bill will reduce markups on items sold in CDCR prison canteens to 35% for the next four years. **The Governor signed the bill on October 8, 2023 and the bill will go into effect on January 1, 2024.**
- **SB 94 (Cortese):** This bill will allow judges to review life without parole (LWOP) sentences for persons who have been incarcerated for at least 25 years and were sentenced for offenses with a “special circumstance” committed before June 5, 1990, the date of a ballot measure that prospectively tied judge’s hands. **The bill is currently pending in the Assembly and is eligible to move forward in 2024.**
- **AB 958 (Santiago):** This bill will restore the right to visit for incarcerated people and their family by making visits a limited civil right. **The bill was held in the Senate Appropriations committee on September 1, 2023 and will not move forward.**
- **SB 81 (Skinner):** This bill will clarify that courts reviewing petitions asking for review of a parole denial should uphold a parole denial when the “preponderance of the evidence” reveals that the person remains a threat to others; and directs courts to return a case to the parole board for a new hearing if a court determines there was not sufficient evidence that the person remains a threat to others. **The Governor vetoed the bill on October 9, 2023.**
- **AB 1306 (Carrillo):** This bill will limit ICE transfers upon completion of prison terms. **The Governor vetoed the bill on September 22, 2023.**