

# Drop LWOP Coalition Orientation

## Overview

Welcome! This orientation document is designed for people who want to get more involved with the Drop LWOP Coalition and help us in our mission to end Life Without Parole (LWOP). There are many different ways to support efforts to end LWOP, and we hope this document helps you find out where you'd like to get involved in the coalition!

## Mission

The mission of the Drop LWOP Coalition is to end Life Without Parole sentencing forever in California. Our goal is to afford relief to those currently serving this sentence, no matter the conviction, through legislative change, commutations, pardons, resentencing, and public awareness about the injustice of the LWOP sentence.

## Background

The movement to end the LWOP sentence started with people inside California's prisons. Inside organizers built increasingly strong connections with each other and advocates outside, creating strong personal and working relationships. Through these connections, several years ago a group of advocates started a storytelling project called A Living Chance with women who had received the LWOP sentence. This project eventually led to the formation of the Drop LWOP Coalition.

## Main Focal Areas

There are many ways to reduce and eventually eliminate Life Without Parole. Recently we've been framing our efforts in 4 main areas:

- Legislation
- Commutations
- Resentencing
- Influencing DA's

## Organization and 'Structure'

The coalition is relatively young and still growing. Individual volunteers are a huge part of the coalition! Many of our volunteers don't represent an organization nor are they involved in another group. In other words, come one, come all!

For organizations there isn't a strict 'membership' structure but generally there are several very active organizations with volunteers or staff who regularly participate. Several more groups are strong partners and over 200 more support our efforts.

## How to Stay Informed

There are a number of ways to get news about the coalition's work.

- **Email Lists**

- **Drop LWOP Organizers Google Group** - this is our email list for sending out monthly meeting info, critical updates, announcements, etc. Anyone who wants to get involved on a regular basis should contact [droplwopoutreach@gmail.com](mailto:droplwopoutreach@gmail.com) and request to be added to this list. By being added to this list, you will get information to join our statewide monthly meeting, which takes place the 3rd Monday of the month at 7:00pm via Zoom.
- **Drop LWOP Action Network Email List** - this list is used to communicate general updates, bigger events/meetings, and campaign actions. You can sign up for this list on your own by clicking on this link: [Drop LWOP Action Network](#)

## Other Communication Media

- **Website:** At [www.droplwop.com](http://www.droplwop.com) you can find various resources. Note: we are still working on keeping it current with new information!
- **Instagram:** [@drop\\_lwop](#) is our Instagram handle, and generally, we post and share most actively here. Give us a follow!
- **Facebook:** At <https://www.facebook.com/droplwopcoalition/> we repost our Instagram posts and sometimes repost other LWOP news.

## How to Get Involved

Joining a workgroup and volunteering to help with specific activities is a great way to support efforts to end LWOP. Many different skills are needed and welcome - there are many ways to help!

- **Workgroup Meetings**

In addition to the monthly statewide meeting, smaller workgroups meet once or twice a month to focus on different working areas. Here is a breakdown of the workgroups.

- **Coordinating Committee** - This group helps set the agenda for our monthly meetings and also manages the coalition's money. Many of the core organizations listed above have a representative or two on the coordinating committee.
- **Inreach** - This committee seeks to keep those on the inside informed and empowered to fight LWOP.
  - Contacts: [kellysav2018@gmail.com](mailto:kellysav2018@gmail.com)
  - Meeting time: 4th Wednesdays of the month @ 7-8pm
- **Legislative Work Group** - This committee focuses on legislation that can reduce and ultimately end LWOP.
  - Contact: [dtrautfield@gmail.com](mailto:dtrautfield@gmail.com)
  - Meeting time: 4th Mondays of the month @ 6-7:30pm
- **Media and Communications** - This work group develops messaging related to our efforts to end LWOP and also creates talking points, videos, social media posts, press releases, and letters to the editor.

- Contacts: [courtney@womenprisoners.org](mailto:courtney@womenprisoners.org), [diana@womenprisoners.org](mailto:diana@womenprisoners.org)
- Meeting time: meets 4th Tuesday of the month @ 5-6:30pm
  
- **Outreach** - This group works to keep organizations and individuals informed about Drop LWOP campaign actions via emails, calls and presentations/events.
  - Contact: [droplwopoutreach@gmail.com](mailto:droplwopoutreach@gmail.com)
  - Meeting time: 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month @ 5-6pm

We hope one of these groups sounds like the right for you! Don't worry if you feel confused after attending some meetings - this is very common because laws, policies and bureaucracy related to LWOP are hard to understand and organizing for change can be difficult. LWOP is part of a very complex system and undoing it is complicated, ever-changing work. We will connect you with a more experienced coalition member, so you have a specific person to talk with about your questions. We are grateful for your help and are here to help you navigate the ins and outs of LWOP!