

Feb 5, 2024



Welcome to The Drop LWOP Coalition's Bulletin!

The bulletin will provide updates on all things related to the Coalition – events, legislation, workshops, resources, and everything in between, and it will arrive in your inbox on a quarterly basis. We encourage you to spread it far and wide!

If you have news, stories, or information for sharing or if you have questions, please feel free to reach out and email droplwopoutreach@gmail.com.

Looking to send the Drop LWOP Bulletin to a friend? Feel free to send them to our [website](#), where the Bulletins will be uploaded regularly!

The Coalition is working hard to expand our reach to every corner of the State of California. To that end, we are hoping to connect with folks who live in or have connections to **East LA, Orange County, or San Diego**.

Please reach out to droplwopoutreach@gmail.com if you are someone with ties to these areas- we'd love to hear from you!

U.N. COMMITTEE CALLS FOR MORATORIUM ON LWOP!

Based on extensive testimony and investigation, the UN Human Rights Committee has made history, calling on the United States to consider a [moratorium on all life-without-parole \(LWOP\) sentences](#). Drop LWOP organizers in coalition with other activists, attorneys, and impacted advocates from around the U.S. submitted a formal [complaint](#) to the United Nations in September 2022 about racism, arbitrary detention, and other fatal flaws of the US criminal legal system including life without parole and other death-by-incarceration (DBI) sentences. A year after the complaint was submitted, a delegation traveled to Geneva Switzerland in October 2023, promoting UN acknowledgment of DBI sentences as cruel and tortuous, violating international human rights laws.

The UN's historic conclusion demonstrates growing international consensus against death-by-incarceration sentences. It expands upon previous recommendations that the United States should "prohibit and abolish the sentence of life imprisonment without parole for juveniles, irrespective of the crime committed," and end LWOP.

After a trip to various US cities and examination of US sentencing, the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance published a [statement](#) of condemnation. The United States uses life without the possibility of parole (LWOP) and other death-by-incarceration (DBI) sentences, which are disproportionately used against Black and Latino individuals and women who are criminalized within the context of domestic violence. "Without the chance of parole," the statement writes, "the rehabilitative function of the prison system is negated, reducing it to a tool of segregation and exploitation."

Here is a link to one of the [events](#) the delegation hosted in Geneva that facilitated discussion about the cruelty of these sentences and the importance of understanding death by incarceration sentences as "the other death penalty."

Check out the [recording of the town hall hosted by the delegation that traveled to Geneva](#). It took place on January 18th, 2024 - almost 100 people were in attendance working to capitalize on [recent international victories](#) in the fight to end LWOP.

Legislative Updates

SB94 is currently being held on the Assembly floor and will be voted on by the Assembly in late March/early April of this year. The Coalition wants to do everything in its power to ensure SB94 passes, as this bill will allow judicial review for individuals serving LWOP who meet the following criteria: their offense occurred before June 6, 1990, and they have served at least 25 years of their sentence. If you are interested in helping move this bill forward, please fill out [this form](#).

Media!

We have some exciting developments from our Media workgroup. Check out the Coalition's [Freedom Stories](#), which highlight individuals who formerly served LWOP. These stories give us hope!

Media is also developing a plan for rapid responses to developing stories connected to LWOP. They will also be setting up trainings for writing OP-eds and Letters to the Editor.

Outreach

Outreach has made some updates to our workgroup model. We now have subcommittees working on specific projects.

We are now directly working on organizing in-person events to expand our community-building and educational online events so we can collaborate with organizations, communities, and academic institutions to support the movement against LWOP.

Both online events planning and in-person event coordinating subcommittees are meeting monthly. If you are interested in joining either of these subcommittees, please email droplwopoutreach@gmail.com.

Outreach is also working on plans to do an outside Walk-a-thon to happen in conjunction with walk-a-thons inside prisons. This can be a great way to highlight the issue of LWOP and also raise some money for the coalition!

Inreach

Our Inreach team is working tirelessly to correspond and uplift the ideas, aspirations, and hard work of advocates on the inside. Individuals who are inside are constantly creating incredible ideas for outreach, narrative control, and outside priorities that the Drop LWOP Coalition relies on for our movement.

At the DROP LWOP 2023 strategy session, the Inreach team decided to prioritize identifying an LWOP point person for each institution and helping each prison build an LWOP support group.

GOOD NEWS!

A recent ruling by the Massachusetts Supreme Court found that sentencing individuals under 21 to LWOP is “cruel and unusual punishment.” This means that in the future the LWOP sentence cannot be given to individuals under 21 years of age.

The ruling paves the way for individuals serving LWOP who were under 21 at the time of their offense to have their case reviewed by the state’s parole board.

You can read more about the decision [here](#). This ruling gives those of us fighting LWOP on the West Coast hope and we stand in solidarity with our comrades serving LWOP on the East Coast.

(A Few) Resources:

- ▶ Take a moment to read and share [Issue #71](#) of CCWP’s The Fire Inside from December, an incredible demonstration of resistance and power from the inside!
- ▶ Review the new report [Maximizing Time, Maximizing Punishment](#) that highlights the lived experience of individuals serving long-term sentences in California Women’s Prisons.

Eager to teach others about LWOP sentencing?

Look no further than this thorough [one-pager](#) that provides a helpful and succinct overview of the who, what, when, and why of LWOP.

Support Hotlines:

The Transition Clinic Network Reentry Healthcare Hotline is 1-510-606-6400.

► People can call it collect from inside California prisons as well as from jails that use GTL phone services. The hotline is staffed by trained community health workers with histories of incarceration who can provide information about local clinics, how to get enrolled in Medi-Cal, and how to navigate the healthcare system.

To utilize the Mental Health First Oakland call or text 510-999-9641.

► Mental Health First Oakland responds to mental health crises including, but not limited to psychiatric emergencies, substance use support, and domestic violence situations that require victim extraction. Call or text 510-999-9641 on Fridays and Saturdays 8:00 p.m. - 8:00 a.m. To utilize the National Alliance on Mental Health, call 1-800-950-6264 or by emailing info@nami.org.

The National Alliance on Mental Health provides a wealth of services and can be used to support you through diverse types of situations. Although the helpline is only available Monday through Friday from 10 AM until 8 PM EST, there is a 24/7 text line available. Simply text 'NAMI' to 741-741 for assistance.

► [Here](#) is a list of regional mental health hotlines and support across the state of California.

**INTERESTED IN JOINING A WORKGROUP?
LEARN HOW TO GET INVOLVED [HERE](#)**



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