

Resolution #54

Title &
Author

"Criminal Justice and Decarceration" by Donald J., Seneca S., and Marina R. of Austin DSA

Budget
Analysis

Staff Costs	\$37,305	Appears to require priority campaign level support as exists now - 1/2 staffer.
12% Overhead	\$4,477	
Direct Costs	\$10,000	Campaign materials.
Total Cost	\$51,781	

Author's
Cost
Estimate

- Resolution would require staff time for supporting criminal justice campaign education, training, and development; estimated 40-80 hours per month
- Resolution would require expenditure of funds on educational and campaign materials; estimated \$10,000 annually

Resolve

BE IT RESOLVED:

- 1) The DSA convention will charter a Police & Prison Abolition Working Group
- 2) The main signatories of this resolution will serve as the interim steering committee for this Working Group, with no more than 2 people per chapter;
- 3) Within its first four months of operation, the interim steering committee will
 - create a survey to gather together DSA members who are already active in this work; staff will send this survey to all members;
 - will convene monthly national calls that are open to all DSA members;
 - will run an election for a steering committee before the end of 2019
- 4) The Working Group will gather together & create resources to support criminal justice organizing & education campaigns across the country including but not limited to:
 - Trainings for power-mapping local criminal justice issues, which have parallel structures & which many chapters are well-situated to pressure;
 - Common pool of issue primers & trainings, as well as canvassing material addressing shared criminal justice issues such as cash bail, judicial discretion, eviction protection from Justices of the Peace, police use of force rates, & costs of policing & incarceration; & for vetting & cultivating candidates to judicial races & running judicial electoral campaigns;

Background
Information

- Trainings in deep canvassing focused on opposition/alternatives to mass incarceration; &
- Coalition mapping & training for how to coordinate, assist & strengthen local abolitionist & reform groups

5) Staff will support the Working Group by:

- Creating a abolition.dsasusa.org website where the WG will be able to update these trainings & resources themselves;
- Sending quarterly all-member emails from the Abolition WG
- Create a sectioned email list for those interested in the work of the WG

6) As a matter of our collective protection, DSA staff shall dedicate resources to tracking anti-protest laws across the country as part of their duty to provide training to all members;

7) The WG, in order to elevate the leadership of black, brown & indigenous people, will identify potential coalitions with existing community-led organizations toward the reduction of policing budgets, the expansion of civilian oversight of policing, & the promotion & funding of alternatives to carceral systems including offender-victim dialogue, conferencing, & sentencing circles;

WHEREAS:

1. The American government wages war on working class communities, especially working class communities of color, to maintain the hierarchy of class domination and keep the working class segregated and weakened. The front line of that war are the police forces of cities across America, effectively taking away the streets from us through routine interactions that may end with people being put in cages or worse;
2. Mass incarceration effectively fractures entire communities of the working class;
3. America is unique in intensity and violence of policing among developed capitalist countries;
4. Police killed 1,147 people in 2017 and 1,164 people in 2018. Black people were 25% of those killed despite being only 13% of the population. (from MappingPoliceViolence.org);
5. Black people are twice as likely to be pulled over by police in traffic stops, and four times as likely to be searched ([Baumgartner, Epp and Shoub interview](#));
6. Empirical research and the experience of communities consistently report heavy bias in policing, arrests, and sentencing, that lead to disproportionate arrests, heavier prison sentences, and continuous targeting of communities of color;
7. The for-profit prison industry and the militarization of police together have led to increasingly dire consequences for Black people and immigrants, who even as children face mortal threats at the hands of the state as well as corporate entities whose industry creates a business demand for incarcerated bodies;
8. Campaigns around courts, criminal justice reforms, and policing reform present powerful opportunities for DSA chapters to materially impact the lives of their communities;

9. The consensus around policing and incarceration in the US is both historically contingent and momentarily fragile. The conditions that gave birth to mass incarceration no longer exist at present, and public support of incarceration is at an all time low. This presents a unique opportunity to reduce incarceration and dismantle the prison-industrial complex;
10. Broad coalitions of working class people exist across the country in the form of social movements against policing and incarceration.