

HUMANITARIAN BILL OF RIGHTS

TABITHA LEE MAYNARD[∞]

Tabitha Maynard presents a Bill of Rights demanding justice from the prison system and the government. Her demands shed light on the multitude of ways people in prison are dehumanized and offer a vision of a more just and equal society.

I. DEMANDS OF THE PRISON SYSTEM

1. Honor Units for good behavior. Create an animal sanctuary, fresh food garden and craft markets, trades training, and continued education. A place where we can better ourselves and give back to our community. Instead of this school for dehumanizing and criminalizing we have now. When abuse and crime are all you experience day after day, all you've ever experienced, all you know... is it any wonder it is what the products of that environment repeat? When you know better you are capable of better.
2. Restorative Justice training and work for prisoners and staff.
3. Mental Health treatment for everyone. Focusing on addictions, PTSD, family reunification, and mental illnesses. Group and individual therapy.

[∞] Tabitha Lee Maynard is 43 years old and has been in a Michigan prison since 2001 for the murder of her father. Her earliest release date is 2025. Ms. Maynard grew up in a tumultuous family atmosphere, where domestic violence and sexual abuse was considered “normal” and ignored. As a child, events such as escaping from her father in the middle of the night while he chased her mother with a 44, moving to many different states with family members she barely knew, and being held hostage by her father to control her mother, was her “normal.” Ms. Maynard was a ward of the court from the age of 8, though she stayed in custody of her father even after he was arrested for sexual abuse. By age 12, she was engaging in risky and life-threatening behaviors as ‘suicide attempts,’ including Russian roulette with the same 44 that her father used to threaten her mother. She has always worked at least two jobs since the age of 15, including farm labor, security, and retail. She joined the Marines at 17 and shipped out two days after graduating high school. However, she was injured soon after and cut loose, sent adrift with no other goals. She was sentenced to 25 years on September 11, 2001.

The labels Christian, middle class, blue collar, Republican, Tea party, law enforcement & military, white, NRA member, and hunter can all be applied to her family. Before her conviction, she was a ‘law abiding citizen,’ had never even received a parking ticket, and never drank, smoked, or did drugs. She wonders now how others would label her: murderer, felon, criminal? After 21 years free, only 3 of which as an ‘adult’ and 25 years locked up in prison with an excellent prison record, Ms. Maynard will be released. She wonders, what then?

DBT and CBT.¹ Therapy Animals living at prison (taken care of by honor unit). Being that most prisoners have mental illnesses or have suffered trauma, what a perfect place for mental health training school???² So far all we have done is created human warehouses to hide the mentally ill with no treatment, just more abuse.

4. Access to fresh foods. A simpler, faster, healthier menu. Allow us to grow our own food (grown and processed by honor unit) or at the very least purchase our food locally, organically, and seasonally. For the support of the community farmers and our health. This is a Michigan state prison. You would think it would be the main system supporting Michigan farmers and along those lines ALL other Michigan industries. Oh, and STOP harassing us when we are trying to eat, let me CHEW MY FOOD!

5. A forum/grievance system held accountable for ACTUALLY solving problems. NOT just to deny, spin, and cover them up as is protocol now!³

6. No more punishing ALL for the transgressions of the few.

7. Mental health, de-escalation, communication, and professionalism training for staff. Mental health debriefings for staff and accountability of staff. Retraining of staff to end dehumanization and exploitation of prisoners. The Staff are currently trained and encouraged to see and treat prisoners as less than human. That is how so few can control so many; outnumbered 100 or more to one by the supposedly worst, most violent people in our country. So, it's no wonder staff end up preying on them too. Bringing in drugs to make some extra cash by exploiting the sick, the drug addicts' addictions.

¹ Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, or CBT, is a type of talk therapy focused on changing the patient's inaccurate or negative thinking to help them more effectively respond to stressful situations. It is used to treat a variety of mental health disorders. See *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy*, MAYO CLINIC, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/cognitive-behavioral-therapy/about/pac-20384610> [<https://perma.cc/TPL9-A9JT>](last visited April 25, 2022). Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, or DBT is a type of CBT that focuses on changing unhealthy behaviors. See Rebecca Buffum Taylor, *Dialectic Behavioral Therapy*, WEBMD (updated February 18, 2020), [https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/dialectical-behavioral-therapy#:~:text=Dialectical%20behavioral%20therapy%20\(DBT\)%20is,and%20other%20self%2Ddestructive%20behaviors](https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/dialectical-behavioral-therapy#:~:text=Dialectical%20behavioral%20therapy%20(DBT)%20is,and%20other%20self%2Ddestructive%20behaviors) [<https://perma.cc/ZJ6B-PJDZ>]

² As of 2014, 73% of women in state prisons had at least one mental health problem. Sarah Varney, *By the Numbers, Mental Illness Behind Bars*, PBS NEWS HOUR (May 15, 2014 at 6:39 PM), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/numbers-mental-illness-behind-bars> [<https://perma.cc/42TG-2XJZ>]

³ See Christopher Blackwell, *The Prison Grievance System Is Broken and Unjust*, THE PROGRESSIVE MAGAZINE (June 19, 2021 at 9:00 AM), <https://progressive.org/latest/prison-grievance-system-unjust-blackwell-210618/> [<https://perma.cc/75LC-NH2Z>]

It is horrible, stressful, and soul sucking to be a correction officer.⁴ Did you know most correction officers on average die young?⁵ There are health hazards involved in dehumanizing your fellow humans. With forced overtime they spend more time in prison dealing with all the same health hazards as the prisoners than at home. They are by law not allowed to strike against the horrible conditions they work in or the treatment they deal with.⁶ That is yet another example of a law made up using those buzz words 'safety & security' to take rights away even from the staff. Have to keep them under control too. Some end up in relationships with the prisoners, since the prisoners are more sympathetic to the half-imprisonment the guards are forced into than the administration that does not care if they eat, sleep, or ever see their families any more than it cares whether a prisoner lives or dies, so long as we cause no fuss.

8. End improvised living spaces and double bunking in single sized cells. Now the powers that be will say we are NOT overcrowded at all, that in fact Michigan now has the lowest prison population it has had in 3 decades.⁷ That is true, we are no longer stacked on top of each other in every old office, closet, and storage room they could pack multiple bunk beds into. BUT what they will NOT tell you is there are still OVER TWICE the amount of women in this facility than it was originally designed and built to hold.⁸

⁴ Corrections has long been considered a stressful job. See Peter Finn, *Correctional Officer Stress: A Cause for Concern and Additional Help*, 62 FEDERAL PROBATION 65 (1998). This problem has been exacerbated in recent years by staff shortages associated with COVID-19. See Keri Blakinger, Jamiles Lartey, Beth Schwartzapfel, Mike Sisak & Christie Thompson, *As Corrections Officers Quit in Drove, Prisons Get Even More Dangerous*, THE MARSHALL PROJECT (November 1, 2021 at 6:00 AM), <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2021/11/01/as-corrections-officers-quit-in-drove-prisons-get-even-more-dangerous> [https://perma.cc/XZ3K-UBL7].

⁵ The life expectancy of a correctional officer is often cited as 59 years. See F. Cheek & M.D.S. Miller, *Reducing Staff and Inmate Stress* 44 CORRECTIONS TODAY 72 (1982). But see C. Eugene Emory Jr., *Rhode Island Corrections Union President Says Correctional Officers' Life Expectancy is 58 Years*, POLITIFACT (Nov. 16, 2011), <https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2011/nov/16/david-mellon/rhode-island-corrections-union-president-david-mel/> (finding no available study confirming the 58-year life expectancy claim or that correctional officers do not live as long).

⁶ See e.g., Security Unit Agreement Between Michigan Corrections Organization SEIU Local 526M, CTW and State of Michigan (January 1, 2019), https://www.michigan.gov/ose/-/media/Project/Websites/ose/CBAs/20192021_MCO_as_Approved_Web_version.pdf?rev=8ed221b8e8044421bb264e252f871263&hash=A696E0248DD4D5BB1129E8A1514DC808 [https://perma.cc/RJN3-FSAK].

⁷ Michigan's prison population was 45,879 in 1998, hit its peak in 2007 at 51,515, and decreased to 33,635 by 2021. Barbara Wieland, *The Michigan Department of Corrections by the Numbers*, SAFE & JUST MICHIGAN (March 25, 2021), <https://www.safeandjustmi.org/2021/03/25/the-michigan-department-of-corrections-by-the-numbers/> [https://perma.cc/PG82-XLZK].

⁸ About 1,550 women live in Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility, which only has capacity for 1,100 people. Anna Gustafson, *At Michigan's Only All-Women Prison, Reimagining a 'Hostile*

9. Tablets for phone calls, video visits, and messaging. Access to educational videos, books, groups, etc. on tablets. More frequent and higher quality connection to family, friends, and society in general and education are large factors of success once released.⁹ Many prisoners don't even have a GED, know how to read, or do simple math.¹⁰ When you only have access to sub-par schools and your time and energy are all taken up by basic survival, there is not much left over for learning.

10. Open prisons for public and press tours. There are plenty of ways to do this securely and safely. The citizens are the ones paying for it all. They have a right to know how their hard-earned money is being used, like what tax money actually pays for and what the prisoners have to pay for themselves and how much of both is just wasted. Literally tossed in the trash. No more unaddressed dark secrets that end in deaths and multi-million-dollar lawsuits. They have a right to see WHO they are paying to keep locked up. Ever wonder what is being hidden from the citizens paying for it all? Like the fact that these big scary criminals are just people, just regular human beings doing the best they can, victims of a system that has been preying on them for generations. Now stuck in an institutional environment where natural/normal human reactions and activities are outlawed.

The ONLY difference between modern US prisons and Nazi concentration camps are the 'degrees'! Yes, they are large degrees, but degrees ONLY. Here in the US, we don't put nearly as many human beings to death. We may feed them sub-par food marked "not for human consumption", but we do feed them. We don't burn or freeze or beat them to death, well at least not most of the time. Possible because a dead "slave" no longer brings in the cash. We don't usually physically torture them, just mentally and emotionally with constant petty dehumanizing indignities that have an insidious soul killing effect. Why do you think prisons are kept big dark secrets??? The press and public kept out and as ignorant as possible using those big buzz words, "safety & security".

Situation', MICHIGAN ADVANCE (March 23, 2022), <https://michiganadvance.com/2022/03/23/at-michigans-only-all-women-prison-reimagining-a-hostile-situation/> [https://perma.cc/852S-5EV4].

⁹ See Leah Wang, *Research Roundup: The Positive Impacts of Family Contact for Incarcerated People and their Families*, PRISON POLICY INITIATIVE (Dec. 21, 2021), https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2021/12/21/family_contact/ [https://perma.cc/K2M9-AN6A] (Summarizing over 50 years of empirical studies finding that contact between people who are incarcerated and their families has positive impacts on health, recidivism, and improvement in school on both sides, and finding that prisons and jails need to do a better job of facilitating family contact).

¹⁰ See e.g., Caroline Wolf Harlow, *Special Report: Education and Correctional Populations*, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS (April 15, 2003), <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf> [https://perma.cc/2WRT-D3FJ].

The money wasted, some **81** billion dollars annually,¹¹ does not even take into account all the wasted lives, all the environmental harm, all done in the name of "safety and security". The accumulated insults and indignities caused by profiling presumptions are destructive in ways hard to measure. Constantly being suspected, accused, watched, doubted, distrusted, presumed guilty, and feared. Do YOU feel safer or more at risk than before??? The accumulated petty indignities by the myriad of rules and laws have an insidiously soul-destroying effect. Stop making so many individual rights criminal.

11. Pay us a real wage that we can take care of ourselves and not have to rely on our families. The main jobs in here pay an average of 20.00 dollars a MONTH. Even the "best" paying jobs in here pay less than 100.00 a month.

The prison system is a Billion-dollar business built on slave labor and captive clientele. Without prisoner workers the prison does NOT run. The prison system chooses who prisoners buy from, usually the company that give the prison the biggest kickback. Prisoners have to buy whatever item at whatever markup price they set.¹² Contracts are hardly ever enforced for us. Many people are under the misconception that the prisons provide everything prisoners need with taxpayer \$. That is just not true!

Prisons provide a shelter with water, electricity, and heating. Three meals a day. (All three meals cost the same as ONE school lunch and some of which comes in boxes with big stamps labeling them as "NOT for human consumption".) They also provide basic clothing (two pants, shirts, shorts, five underwear, socks, and three bras). Most made by prisoner slave labor. Two rolls of tissue a week and now since COVID, hand soap in the bathrooms. Anything else [like] soap, toothpaste, tampons, writing material, TV's, etc. have to be bought by the individual. Other common items like exercise equipment, sports items, cable, irons, microwaves, hot water etc. are all paid for with a common prisoner fund, raised from prisoners and their families. An account that is controlled by the same people that have to "keep track" of it....

¹¹ Casey Kuhn, *The U.S. Spends Billions to Lock People Up, but Very Little to Help Them Once They're Released*, PBS NEWS HOUR (Apr. 7, 2021 at 5:18 pm), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/economy/the-u-s-spends-billions-to-lock-people-up-but-very-little-to-help-them-once-theyre-released> [<https://perma.cc/GD8V-C925>].

¹² See Stephen Rahe, *The Company Store: A Deeper Look at Prison Commissaries*, PRISON POL'Y INITIATIVE (May 2018), <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/commissary.html> [<https://perma.cc/Y6YM-LB5X>] (discussing the limited options at prison stores due to the "legal monopoly" enjoyed by commissary operators).

It always seems like items and money are coming up missing. But when we ask for an audit of our prisoner funds, well guess who does the audit or denies the audit??? This creates a severe case of haves and have nots. If you don't have a GED to get one of the better paying jobs in here or family that sends money into you, you may not even have soap to wash with. Even though sharing is against prison rules, we usually take up a collection to try and provide for those that have nothing.

The prison system is the MOST wasteful institution ever created, from their use of human life to the very way they are designed and built. Very little recycling happens. Items that could be reused or donated are thrown away. The buildings themselves are built like they were purposely designed to waste space and energy. There is no bigger collection of wasteful, unprofessionalism, miscommunication, disorganization, and drug use! I've never used drugs and before prison did not even know what they looked like. Now 20 years in prison I've seen them all. And seen dozens and dozens of overdoses. Some may have been suicides. Then there's the "health care" system that we more accurately call "death care".¹³ They alone have killed and maimed more than all the overdoses and suicides together.

Build the prison in such a place and way that it supports itself and does not cost so much taxpayer money to maintain. I.e., solar powered insulated buildings built for the weather to save on heating and cooling. You have to feed, clothe, and maintain anyway, why not set it up as an apprenticeship and business that is a real business too. One, you are giving the prisoners a skill to be successful with and two, you are not costing taxpayers to do it. Have farms, a catering kitchen, maintenance work etc. Set it up where we get to truly pay back our debt to society instead of being an even bigger drain.

12. Reform the parole system and the parole board. What a joke these are. First, they seem to come up with any reason they can, even making it up sometimes, to hold on to anyone that may have a chance at being successful. Only releasing those that will come right back in and continue to fund the "machine" the "warehouse".¹⁴ At least that's what it seems like to all of us (staff and prisoner alike) in here. I've personally seen someone with the worst possible prison record, like a hundred and fifty tickets, see the parole board

¹³ See generally Ashley Hurst, Brenda Castañeda, & Erika Ramsdale, *Deliberate Indifference: Inadequate Health Care in U.S. Prisons*, 170 ANNALS OF INTERNAL MED. 563 (2019).

¹⁴ In 2020, the recidivism rate in Michigan was 26.6%. Brianna MacLean, *MDOC: Michigan's Recidivism Rates Lowest in State History*, UPMATTERS (Feb. 18, 2021, 5:00PM), <https://www.upmatters.com/news/mdoc-michigans-recidivism-rates-lowest-in-state-history/> [<https://perma.cc/CR23-94VH>].

FROM segregation (the hole) and get their parole going home from SEGREGATION. Course those ones are either dead or back within the month or less. While in that same time period flopping (not giving parole) to someone with the best prison record no tickets, kept a job their entire time, and worked hard in every program they could get into. They are holding on to people that their judges in some cases even the prosecutor and victims speak on their behalf for release!!!!

It sure seems like they only release those set up for failure. If you are not a "career" criminal or an active addict without family support or any other way to support yourself or better yet have a criminal, abusive, or addicted family you are going out to Well, they are going to try to hold you forever. I know there just has to be something else going on here, we just can't see it from our end?????? Try as we might to figure it out. I try not to be this pessimistic, but that is exactly what it looks like from the inside. And of course, they have all kinds of key scare tactic propaganda words they use for the public that is kept so in the dark. Same type of words they use to excuse all their treatment of us on the inside.

II. DEMANDS OF STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

1. End mass incarceration for being poor, mentally ill, an addict, or a minority. End the last vestiges of slavery, Amendment 13.¹⁵ Give prisoners the right to vote and 'count' them in their hometowns, stop the gerrymandering!¹⁶ Pay working prisoners a fair wage (minimum wage), no more slave type labor. That allows them to pay their way, have a saving account for release, and send money home to help family.

The United States of America makes more slaves of its own citizens than any other country!!!¹⁷ This is NOT a first-place position to be proud of.

¹⁵ The Thirteenth Amendment continued to allow slavery in the U.S. "as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted." U.S. CONST. amend. XIII, § 1. *See also* Whitney Bennis, *American Slavery, Reinvented*, ATLANTIC (Sept. 21, 2015), <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/09/prison-labor-in-america/406177/> [<https://perma.cc/J29A-ETFU>] ("With few exceptions, inmates are required to work if cleared by medical professionals at the prison . . . For this forced labor, prisoners earn pennies per hour, if anything at all.").

¹⁶ *See Prison Gerrymandering Explained*, DEMOCRACY DOCKET (Oct. 4, 2021), <https://www.democracymocket.com/explainers/prison-gerrymandering-explained/> [<https://perma.cc/5R2Y-QXVT>].

¹⁷ The United States incarcerates 629 of its residents for every 100,000, the highest rate in the world. *Highest to Lowest - Prison Population Rate*, WORLD PRISON BRIEF, <https://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to->

Hitler, Stalin, North Korea ... nice to be part of the horror group, isn't it? We are so much better than this! Prisoners are the invisible hidden results of "too big to fail"! We have a high tolerance for incarcerating huge segments of our population, wasting their lives as well as resources... As long as we continue to live in denial and treat only crime while ignoring its origins we are bound to fail! Poverty, unemployment, inferior schools, social isolation, and substandard housing are all breeding grounds for trauma.¹⁸ Trauma breeds further trauma; hurt people hurt other people.

As a society we can limit that hurt and help people before they become desperate. All the "tough on crime" in the world will not stop a desperate person from desperate action or a hurt person lashing out, from using the only tools/actions they know. But we CAN help people from ever being in those positions. This is a very important choice/question that most people do not even think about even though the answer affects ALL of us.

It is a choice that so far in our country has been made for us, through fear mongering propaganda from our government lobbying by corporations. Way too many laws have been written to criminalize way too many personal choices for the sole purpose of persecuting the poor, mentally ill, and minorities of our society. These laws serve no useful/ helpful purpose, but to take away choices and chances. With these laws our government has turned being poor, mentally ill, and a minority into a crime, turned human beings into trash to be tossed aside and hidden from view.

By labeling people as criminals, the government can freely dehumanize them and put them in prisons as the last Constitutionally legal SLAVES in the good old U.S. of A.¹⁹ Where the corporations in the (PIC) Prison Industry Complex can make BILLIONS off them from YOUR taxpayer money.²⁰ These are the same corporations that of course make large donations to political campaigns for said politicians to beat that "Tough on Crime" drum, to keep the wheels of systematic criminalization greased and

lowest/prison_population_rate?field_region_taxonomy_tid=All [https://perma.cc/G8J6-EPTZ] (last visited Apr. 21, 2022).

¹⁸ See, e.g., FAMILY-INFORMED TRAUMA TREATMENT CENTER, UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA AND URBAN POVERTY ON FAMILY SYSTEMS: RISKS, RESILIENCE AND INTERVENTIONS 11 (2010) ("Mounting evidence suggests that children and adolescents growing up in urban poverty are more likely than those growing up in other contexts to experience multiple traumas and significant adverse life events, and to thus develop complex symptoms of traumatic distress at disproportionate rates.").

¹⁹ For a discussion of continuing constitutional slavery, see *supra*, note 15.

²⁰ According to IBISWorld, the PIC had a revenue of \$9.3 billion in 2021. *Correctional Facilities Industry in the US - Market Research Report*, IBISWORLD (July 28, 2021), <https://www.ibisworld.com/united-states/market-research-reports/correctional-facilities-industry/> [https://perma.cc/T46H-CMLT]. For specific data on the corporations that profit off mass incarceration, see *The Prison Industry: Mapping Private Sector Players*, WORTH RISES (May 2020), <https://worthrises.org/theprisonindustry2020> [https://perma.cc/JX6H-ZVZL].

turning in their favor.²¹ Said politicians then tote the propaganda horns of "Safety & Security" to keep people in fear.

Not taking mental health issues into consideration is as cruel as saying to someone who has lost their legs, "you must climb these stairs with no assistance, and if you don't, you're just lazy" or to say to someone who is blind, "you should get across this busy interstate highway unaided, or you're just cowardly." There are hundreds of ways we accommodate physical disabilities or at least understand them. We get angry when people fail to recognize the need for thoughtful and compassionate assistance when it comes to the physically disabled, BUT because mental disabilities are not 'visible' in the same way, we tend to be dismissive of the needs of the mentally disabled and quick to judge their deficits and failures. We have created whole human warehouses to keep them out of sight.

Use harm reduction alternatives like restorative justice, mediators, and mental health training instead of policing and incarceration— choices that actually help people and society instead of just causing more harm. Focus on stopping crime from happening instead of punishment after the fact that does nothing to help the victims or keep others safe. We have blamed the victims for being victims long enough! It is time to prevent the causes.

Treat the underlying cause of the criminal behavior and you can fix the "criminal." Most people are not "bad," they are broken. If we saved all the money we spend (\$40,000 some a year) to keep someone needlessly locked up and instead spent that on saving the kids, we would not have so many broken adults creating more broken kids and on and on.² Cap all Life Sentences to 20 years. Have public hearings, with burden of proof on the state for any continued incarceration. Nobody is the same exact person 20 years later. Are you the same at 40 that you were at 20?²² Reform all sentencing guidelines for restorative justice. Install a fair system of 'earned' time off through education and service. Make Parole Board decisions appealable. They must give concrete reasons for flops, not just hot button terms.

2. Legalize and Tax all drugs, gambling, and prostitution. Use funds for free education and mental & physical health care. The "war on drugs" was created with fear mongering propaganda to target and persecute minorities for

²¹ For a breakdown of political spending by private prison companies, see *Summary*, OPENSECRETS.ORG, <https://www.opensecrets.org/industries/indus.php?ind=G7000> [<https://perma.cc/UPM4-Z4KL>] (last visited Apr. 22, 2022).

²² Dana Goldstein, *Too Old to Commit Crime?*, THE MARSHALL PROJECT (March 20, 2015 at 1:00 PM), <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2015/03/20/too-old-to-commit-crime> [<https://perma.cc/776R-WSS5>] (discussing the prospect of shorter sentences based on the fact that lawbreaking drops off after age 25).

continued oppression and slavery. It has ONLY caused more and worse harm, not the least of which has been generational mass incarceration. It is a complete failure!!! Criminalizing prostitution is targeting and harming the victims coerced and forced into human trafficking/sex work. What someone VOLUNTARILY does with/to their own body should be no business of the government!!!

Our own government has been the biggest drug runners in history. Trading in heroin, cocaine, and guns to fund their black operations against "Communism" and whoever else they see as threatening their money and power.²³ Big banks, big pharma, big agri, and all the other big corporations can commit fraud, steal, poison, and even kill with immunity.²⁴ How many of them do you see being held responsible, in prison, or made to pay back those they harmed?!

3. Remove all laws that protect politicians, judges, prosecutors, police, and any other government worker from being held criminally and civilly accountable for their misconduct or illegal activities.²⁵ Right now, they can get away with making more and more U.S. citizens into slaves for longer and longer periods. Our justice system is all about making slaves not justice, not protecting citizens, or helping the victims. A great idea, our justice system, has been poisoned, corrupted, and infiltrated. It is rotting from its core. It has become all about the money paid for with human lives. Mass incarceration is the not so hidden, just ignored, results of a police state.

Please do not just take my word for this, do the research yourself. Follow the money trail: who is getting rich, kickbacks, side deals, etc. off the prison system! Where do the profits come from of those that lobby so hard for more ridiculous laws and longer sentences and say it is to help the victims. Yet in our justice system victims are regularly re-victimized by the system, shoved aside, and not listened to, not 'helped' in any real concrete way.²⁶ Talk

²³ See, William Blum, *The CIA, Contras, Gangs, and Crack*, INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES (Nov. 1, 1996), https://ips-dc.org/the_cia_contras_gangs_and_crack/ [<https://perma.cc/U4YG-97NS>]

²⁴ Peter Henning, *The Challenge of Sentencing White-Collar Criminals*, *The New York Times* (Sept. 12, 2018), <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/12/business/dealbook/sentencing-white-collar-criminals.html> [<https://perma.cc/E3MS-K9JQ>].

²⁵ See e.g., *Learn About the Effects of Absolute Immunity for Prosecutors*, NATIONAL POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT, <https://www.nlg-npap.org/absolute-immunity/> [<https://perma.cc/A2RS-HSV9>].

²⁶ See e.g., Simon McCarthy-Jones, *Survivors of Sexual violence are Let Down by the Criminal Justice System – Here's What Should Happen Next*, *THE CONVERSATION* (March 29, 2018 at 5:28 AM), <https://theconversation.com/survivors-of-sexual-violence-are-let-down-by-the-criminal-justice-system-heres-what-should-happen-next-94138> [<https://perma.cc/L97L-7C4G>].

to anyone that has had any type of run in with our justice system from either side, victims or perpetrators.

4. Introduce UBI: Universal Basic Income for every citizen. To meet the needs of food, shelter, health care, and education. Along with same flat % income tax for everyone. This gives every citizen free choice along with the chance to be the best they can be. No confusing tax codes that the rich can sneak their way out of. Imagine what people could do, the amazing discoveries and businesses that could be started when people don't have to worry about putting food on the table or where they will sleep at night. When single parents don't have to worry about food, shelter, and childcare...when people get a real chance to be who they want to be. When our opportunities and education are not limited by our skin color, how rich our parents are or if we have parents at all, or what zip code we were raised in. Imagine what can be accomplished when mere survival is not taking up all of someone's time and energy.

5. Reform campaign financing so the politicians get back to working for citizens instead of corporations. Stop subsidizing the rich to get richer. Using the taxpayer money of the poor and middle class to make already rich corporations richer. Only use our tax money to subsidize research and experimentation that can be used by all and benefit all. Too many (99%) of current subsidies are scams by the "big" to steal tax money and limit competition²⁷ the whole time while telling the middle class and poor, or just not super rich, that it is for their own good. Are you poor or middle class seeing any of the billions currently given out??? Ever asked where it actually goes?

6. Introduce STV: Single Transferable Vote, allowing every citizen of this great country to know each of their votes matter. So even if my first choice does not win, maybe my second choice has a chance. Have eight sets of referendums a year for citizens to introduce bills and challenge laws. The government works for us to keep us safe. Should we not have a say in that, instead of just relying on a politician to keep their word??? Government is created to serve us, not vice versa. Our voices need to be heard. The founders knew this and created the best system they could at that time, leaving it open for improvements, for change. They knew the people, the society, the system

²⁷ See Sophia Crisafulli, *Biggest Corporate Subsidies of the Last 20 Years*, STACKER (April 26, 2019), <https://stacker.com/stories/2946/biggest-corporate-subsidies-last-20-years> [https://perma.cc/UZ3B-75L4]

that does not do /get better as it knows/ learns better (does not adapt) will surely fail. We still have a chance; are we brave enough to take it?

We have forgotten that real change has only ever come about from the everyday people standing up and saying, "no more!" We forget we are the power!!! Together we are an unstoppable force. We must stand for change or risk our society going extinct. What has been in place is not working, it is poisoning us. If we do not adapt then like every animal, plant, civilization before, we will NOT survive. When good people standing up together are brave enough to risk all, we can change the world; in fact, we are all that ever has!