50 YEARS AND A WAKE UP
ENDING THE MASS INCARCERATION CRISIS IN AMERICA

THE SENTENCING PROJECT
50 Years of Mass Incarceration

U.S. State and Federal Prison Population

[Bar chart showing the trend of U.S. state and federal prison population from 1925 to 2021.]
Historic Crime Drop

Reported Violent Crime Rate, Per 100,000 Residents
Decarceration of Youth

The number of youth held in juvenile justice facilities fell from a peak of 109,000 in 2000 to 25,000 in 2020 — a 77% decline.
### Disparities: Progress and Persistence

#### Imprisonment Rates per 100,000 Residents: 2000 vs. 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>12% increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>26% decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>68% decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>3,457</td>
<td>1,890</td>
<td>45% decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinx</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>20% decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>1,220</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>31% decrease</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Call for Universal Decarceration

U.S. Prison Population by Conviction Offense

- Violent: 2% reduction since 2009
- Drug: 34% reduction since 2007
- Property: 29% reduction since 2007
The prison population serving a life sentence today is larger than the total prison population in 1970.

“The Ungers”: nearly 200 Maryland lifers who gained their freedom through the courts.
Racial Disparities Grow With Sentence Length

Black Americans in U.S. and Prison Populations, 2019

- General Population: 14%
- Prison: 33%
- Served at Least 10 Years: 46%
Broad Impacts

Photograph by Riek Bol