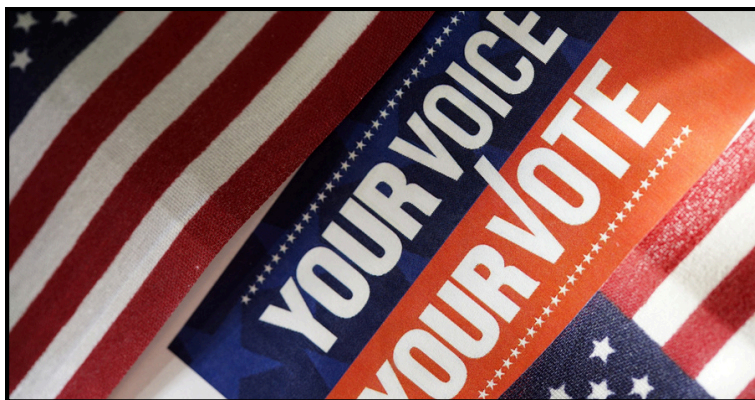


YOUR VOTE COUNTS

**Johnnie Khalif Veal
Executive Director,
Project Sound Off**



The Presidential election will profoundly affect our statewide candidates running for office. Not voting locally leaves important issues up to a small minority of eligible voters and impacts future elections and policies.

As we look at the criminal justice landscape, with judges and bad legislation in the general assembly that has affected our communities for decades, we must be attentive to the choices we make regarding our judicial picks.

Before you cast your vote, research the judges slated to run or seeking retention. You can do this by contacting any of these organizations and asking questions about your candidate of choice.

Illinois State Bar
The Chicago Council of Lawyers
The Chicago Bar Association
The Alliance of Bar Association for Judicial Screening

For the communities and families directly affected by the criminal justice system, let your voices be heard in 2025 in the General Assembly session and support parole for all Illinoisans. Review our Bill support.

HB2045 Elder parole
HB3373, SB2129 Parole for Illinois

Project Sound Off

WE DEMAND TO BE HEARD

Project News

FALL 2024



MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON APPOINTS NEW DIRECTOR OF REENTRY



Joseph Mapp

Jocie Jackson

In an encouraging development for those transitioning back into society, Mayor Brandon Johnson has appointed Joseph Mapp, an alumnus of the Education Justice Project (EJP), as the new Director of Reentry. This appointment is seen as a significant milestone in the administration's commitment to supporting individuals who have been incarcerated.

Joseph Mapp's role will be vital in ensuring that former inmates receive the necessary resources and support to reintegrate successfully. The community is encouraged to rally behind him, providing the backing needed to effect meaningful change.

SEPTEMBER 2024 COALITION EVENTS: A MONTH OF ACTION AND ADVOCACY

Jocie Jackson

September has been a month of spectacular events, bringing together our coalition partners to fight for change, educate our communities, and acknowledge the hard work done on behalf of so many.

Strategy Meetings with “Statesville Speaks”

On September 7, our strategy meetings with “Statesville Speaks” and coalition partners concluded with a positive blueprint for seeking justice and release for the elderly and geriatric prison population. Our pending House Bill for the elderly will be addressed during the Spring session at the General Assembly in 2025.

Illinois Legal Aid Online Fundraiser

Illinois Legal Aid Online (ILAO) held their fundraiser banquet on September 10th at Venue West. The gala was extraordinary, celebrating ILAO’s incredible work in providing legal services and day-to-day support on housing, expungement, knowing your rights, and many other services that impact our struggling communities. We salute ILAO for the millions they serve.

Realizing Release Conference

On September 14, the MacArthur Justice Center and the National Parole Transformation Project (NPTP) held the Realizing Release conference. This event featured eloquent and dynamic speakers addressing “Mass Supervision” after parole. Project Sound Off and NPTP led discussions on the effects of bad legislation and the revolving door of recidivism. Mr. Johnnie Khalif Veal delivered an in-depth presentation on parole and Mass Supervision laws in Illinois, highlighting their impact on communities across the country. Our call to action for 2025 was clearly defined at this conference.

A Month of Community Action

This month has been an educational and informative journey, thanks to the efforts of all our coalition partners. The Project Sound Off family salutes all our partners and the invaluable services they provide in our fight for change.



STATEVILLE CORRECTIONAL CENTER CLOSES



Jazmine Salas Garcia

Brown rust water flowing through the taps. Poor ventilation that makes it difficult to breathe in the scorching summer heat. Pieces of concrete crumbling onto the ground. Incarcerated individuals at Stateville Correctional Center lived in brutal conditions for decades. Earlier this year, the Illinois Department of Corrections was court-ordered to close and rebuild the facility for staff and resident safety. As of September 30, Stateville has been completely emptied, and residents moved to other prisons. But the new state-of-the-art prison won't end the inhumane conditions.

Individuals who are pushed into the criminal justice system face dehumanizing conditions from the moment they enter, from being assigned an inmate number and receiving their prison uniforms to following a tight schedule and facing limitations on contacting their loved ones on the outside. Prison guards are given complete impunity to harass, intimidate, and physically and sexually assault incarcerated people.

A lot of attention has been given to the prison conditions at Stateville, especially in the wake of the horrific death of Michael Broadway. It's not just the hazardous conditions of the facility that dehumanize incarcerated individuals; it's the conditions of the system as a whole. While a new facility will fix the building problems that were killing residents, it's only a matter of time before additional inhumane conditions arise. A new prison won't end the horrific treatment. The physical prison conditions were just a symptom of a broader problem. Instead of rebuilding a prison, why doesn't the State of Illinois try something different?

The common sentiment regarding prisons and jails is that individuals are rehabilitated for crimes. But the real purpose of mass incarceration is for the powers that be to keep their foot on the necks of oppressed individuals. Black and Latino people are criminalized due to failed policies like the War on Drugs and incarcerated at higher rates.

To end the dehumanization of incarcerated people, we must uproot our criminal justice system and replace it with effective tools and strategies that won't cause harm. We must end the criminalization of communities of color. The State of Illinois must invest in communities and programs that create safety - education, health care, mental health care - as an actual crime prevention strategy.

ABOUT PROJECT NEWS

Project News is the newsletter for the Project Sound Off organization. This paper, founded by Josie Jackson and Jazmine Salas, amplifies news about the criminal justice system and stories from individuals affected by mass incarceration. We are seeking writers, photographers, and content creators to submit pieces for Project News. Email j.salas@projectsoundoff.org to get involved!