

# Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504

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## DERECHOS PARA TODOS RIGHTS FOR ALL BLACK LIVES MATTER

### U.S. Income Inequality Widens

Average income for the top 1% of households went up 7.7% to \$1.36 million in 2015. The economic growth of top earners outpaced all poorer households that year. Income for the richest 1% rose twice as fast as it did for the remaining 99% of households. However, in households outside the top 1%, the average income rose 3.9% in 2015, to \$48,768 in 2015. (Itself an amount that only a tiny percentage of our readers can do more than imagine.) This was the strongest annual gain since 1998.

Income growth in 2015 was greatest among the super-wealthy--the top 0.1% of households. They own almost as much wealth as the bottom 90%. Of all new income, 58% is going to the top 1%. Their incomes climbed nearly 9% to an average of \$6.75 million.

The wealthiest 62 people on this planet own as much wealth as the bottom half of the world's population, which is around 3.6 billion people. The top 1% in the world now own more wealth than the whole of the bottom 99%.

The median male worker in the United States today is making \$726 less than he did in 1973; the median female worker is making \$1,154 less than in 2007, after adjusting for inflation. Nearly 47 million people in the U.S. live in poverty.

As reported in June of 2016, nearly 47 million people in this country live in poverty. An estimated 28 million have no health insurance and many others are underinsured. The younger generation will probably have a lower standard of living than their parents.

One place where these numbers are even more dramatic and unfair is in Puerto Rico, where 58% of the children live in poverty.

### Prisoners' Families hit Hard by Poverty

Those of us with family members who are imprisoned well know the reality of struggling to make ends meet. This is documented in a September 2016 report issued by the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights (1970 Broadway, Suite 1125, Oakland CA 94612). The report states that of these families, nearly two-thirds struggle to meet their basic needs. That includes the 50% that are unable to afford sufficient food and adequate housing.

Costs associated with incarceration, like traveling for prison visits and high phone bills have pushed more than one-third of the families into debt. As we are already aware, many of the 2.4 million people who are in prison or jail are parents who had been their family's primary income earners.

And for those of us formerly incarcerated, a criminal conviction often means that the family can no longer live in government-subsidized housing. Finding work is a common post-release problem as is qualifying for educational grants and loans.

Of the formerly imprisoned surveyed, 26% remained unemployed five years after their release, and the vast majority of others had found only part-time or temporary jobs.

Among those surveyed--over 1,080 formerly incarcerated in 14 states--the averaged debt for court-related fines and fees alone was \$13,607. Needless to say, the vast majority of those of us imprisoned and jailed, in addition to being people of color, live at or below the poverty line of \$11,770 for individuals. Rates of imprisonment of family members are 44% for Black and 12% for white women.

## Los antecedentes racistas y xenófobos del candidato a Fiscal General de Trump

El candidato a Fiscal General propuesto por el presidente Trump declaró durante más de nueve horas ante el Comité de Asuntos Judiciales del Senado, durante las cuales negó ser un racista y trató de distanciarse de las promesas más extremas de Trump. A medida que respondía las preguntas, el senador republicano de Alabama Jeff Sessions fue reiteradamente interrumpido por manifestantes que cantaban "¡No a Trump! ¡No al KKK! ¡No al fascismo en Estados Unidos!" En el pasado, Sessions se opuso a leyes que ofrecen a los inmigrantes un camino para obtener la ciudadanía, cuestionó que la Constitución garantice la ciudadanía a toda persona que nazca en Estados Unidos y declaró que el matrimonio homosexual era una amenaza para la cultura estadounidense. Además votó contra la reautorización de la Ley sobre violencia contra las mujeres, se opuso a la Ley del derecho al voto y tiene un historial de haber hecho comentarios racistas.

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To receive the CPR Newsletter by postal mail monthly, send us up to 12 self-addressed, stamped envelopes (with the CPR return address).

Keep sending us address changes and renewal requests as we struggle to maintain the mailing list for the January holiday card/ new calendar mailing as accurately as possible.

Also, note that the *only* address to be sure to reach us is: PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504. Some resource address listings are incorrect.

NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS; for our protection, please do not mark envelopes sent to us as "Legal Mail."

Many, many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons Project for making our Newsletter free on-line for downloading and distribution. It is at: <http://www.realcostofprisonsproject.org/html--this is a GREAT site!>

We depend on our readers' donations & thank you for your support! Mil Gracias! \*\*\*\*\*

## UPDATE ON GUANTANAMO

Of the 40 to 60 prisoners remaining there as of this mid-January writing, 26 are deemed "too dangerous to release," but the U.S. government has no plans to prosecute them, because some of them were tortured. The *New York Times* says: "Holding these prisoners at Guantánamo forever is untenable for a nation that claims to adhere to the rule of law."

## THE NUMBERS GAME

> 24% of the total population of incarcerated women in the U.S. are African American, but 41% of the women held in solitary confinement are African American  
> In California, Latinos are 42% of the general prison population, but 86% of those held in solitary confinement. "Whites" are 22% of the general prison population there, and are only 9% of those in solitary.

> Black immigrants from African and Caribbean countries make up over 20% of the population facing deportation on criminal grounds. They make up 5.4% of undocumented immigrants.

> Massachusetts imprisons African American defendants 8 times more than "white" defendants; it imprisons Hispanic defendants 5 times more than "white" defendants. These disparities are above the national average.

> There are 49,000 prisoners in the U.S. doing Life Without the possibility of being released. In England and Wales it is a total of 55.

> In 1970, U.S. state and federal prisons caged just under 200,000 people. In 2013, the number of U.S. federal prisoners was over 200,000.

> Most prisoners are men, but the incarceration rate of Black women is 113 per 100,000 of the population. That is higher than the total incarceration rate in France or Germany.

> African Americans are imprisoned six times as much as "whites" in the U.S. and Hispanics are imprisoned at twice the rate of "whites."

> The number of people over the age of 50 who are imprisoned in the U.S. has more than tripled since 1994 and typically costs \$68,000 per year.

> The incarceration rate in the U.S., according to English magazine *The Economist* of June 20, 2015, has risen sevenfold since the 1970s (other sources say that between 1980 and 2013, the federal prison population increased by almost 800 percent). That makes the U.S. rate five times that of Britain's, nine times Germany's and 14 times Japan's.

> At any one time, one U.S. adult in 35 is in prison, on parole or on probation.

> Trump's pledge to clamp down on immigration and to deport millions of people has given the for-profit prison industry its biggest boost in years. A crackdown like the one Trump has proposed would cost the federal government from \$400 billion to \$600 billion. The Department of Homeland Security has said it will continue to use for-profit companies to house immigrants.