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8 TO ABOLITION

Abolitionist Policy Changes to Demand
from Your City Officials

#8TOABOLITION



While communities across the country mourn the loss of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Jamel Floyd, and so many more Black victims of police murder, Campaign Zero released its 8 Can't Wait campaign, offering a set of eight reforms they claim would reduce police killings by 72%. As police and prison abolitionists, we believe that this campaign is dangerous and irresponsible, offering a slate of reforms that have already been tried and failed, that mislead a public newly invigorated to the possibilities of police and prison abolition, and that do not reflect the needs of criminalized communities.

We honor the work of abolitionists who have come before us, and those who organize now. A better world is possible. We refuse to allow the blatant co-optation of decades of abolitionist organizing toward reformist ends that erases the work of Black feminist theorists. As the abolitionist organization Critical Resistance recently noted, 8 Can't Wait will merely "improve policing's war on us." Additionally, many abolitionists have already debunked the 8 Can't Wait campaign's claims, assumptions, and faulty science.

ABOLITION CAN'T WAIT.

At its root, policing is a system designed to uphold oppression. One thousand people are killed by police every year, and Black people are murdered at three times the rate of white people. Up to fifty percent of people murdered by the police have disabilities. Up to 40% of police officers have perpetrated intimate partner violence, and sexual violence is the second most common form of police brutality, primarily targeting Black women and especially those who are sex workers and drug users. Many of these incidents of police violence are undocumented by studies and only uplifted through grassroots movements. Black people who are women, trans, gender non-conforming, sex working, and queer are often criminalized for actions they take to survive gendered violence, as we have seen in the cases of Tracy McCarter, Chrystul Kizer, Alisha Walker, GiGi Thomas, Marissa Alexander, Bresha Meadows, Cyntoia Brown, and many others. We reject the notion of a "perfect survivor"; we do not believe anyone deserves to be caged, nor do we prescribe to the state's notions of "innocence" and culpability. We recognize that the system of policing is heavily intertwined with

the military industrial complex, both here and abroad. In abolishing policing, we seek to abolish imperialist forms of police, such as militaries responsible for generations of violence against Black and brown people worldwide.

As abolitionists, we recognize that reforms that do not reduce the power of the police—including those proposed by 8 Can't Wait—simply create new opportunities to surveil, police, and incarcerate Black, brown, indigenous, poor, disabled, trans, gender oppressed, queer, migrant people, and those who work in street economies. We believe in a world where there are zero police murders because there are zero police, not because police are better trained or better regulated—indeed, history has shown that ending police violence through more training or regulations is impossible.

We also recognize that all police and prisons will not disappear tomorrow. Instead, we believe in the strategic importance of non-reformist reforms, or measures that reduce the scale, scope, power, authority, and legitimacy of criminalizing institutions. We also recognize carceral agents' constant attempts to co-opt and rebrand abolition through the language of harm reduction, as we are currently witnessing with the #8CantWait campaign. We envision abolition as not only a matter of tearing down criminalizing systems such as police and prisons that shorten the lives of Black, brown, and poor people, but also a matter of building up life-sustaining systems that reduce, prevent, and better address harm. We seek a reparations model, wherein our communities that have been harmed by policing and mass criminalization for centuries are given their due from every corporation and institution that has profited from policing.

To build an abolitionist world that prioritizes the lives of Black people, we have drawn upon decades of abolitionists' work to compile this list of demands targeted toward city and municipal powers. Honoring the long history of abolitionist struggle, we join in their efforts to divest from the prison industrial complex, invest in our communities, and create the conditions for our ultimate vision: a world without police, where no one is held in a cage, and all people thrive and be well.

ABOLITIONIST POLICY CHANGES TO DEMAND FROM YOUR CITY OFFICIALS

The end goal of these reforms is not to create better, friendlier, or more community-oriented police or prisons. Instead, we hope to build toward a society without police or prisons, where communities are equipped to provide for their safety and wellbeing.

1 // DEFUND THE POLICE

- Reject any proposed expansion to police budgets.
- Demand the highest budget cuts per year, until they slash police budget to zero.
 - Slash police salaries across the board until they are zeroed out.
 - Immediately fire police officers who have any excessive force complaints.
 - No hiring of new officers or replacement of fired or resigned officers.
 - Fully cut funding for public relations.
 - Suspend the use of paid administrative leave for cops under investigation.
- Require police, not cities, to be liable for misconduct and violence settlements.
- Ban police contracting for nonprofits and institutions.
- Reduce the power of police unions.
 - Until the police are fully defunded, make police union contract negotiations public.
 - Pressure the AFL-CIO to denounce police unions.
 - Prohibit city candidates taking money from police unions and stop accepting union funds.
 - Withhold pensions and don't rehire cops involved in use of excessive force.
- Abolish asset forfeiture programs and laws.
- Deplatform white supremacist public officials.
- Prohibit private-public innovation schemes that profit from temporary technological fixes to systemic problems of police abuse and violence. These contracts and data-sharing arrangements, however profitable for technologists and reformists, are lethal.

2 // DEMILITARIZE COMMUNITIES

- Disarm law enforcement officers, including the police and private security.
- Remove cops from hospitals.
 - Prohibit law enforcement from accessing private patient information.
- End the militarization of Black and brown neighborhoods by ending broken windows policing, "precision policing," community policing, and all iterations of quality of life policing programs (neighborhood policing, "gang" policing, "repeat-offender" policing, etc).
- Surveillance technologies (CCTV, face printing, DNA and biometric databases, acoustic gunshot detection, drones, AI and risk profiling algorithms, and other forms of predictive policing) are weapons in the hands of law enforcement. End police, military, and immigration enforcement contracts with any private companies that provide these services, and prohibit the experimental design and rollout of in-house systems.
- Dismantle fusion centers, county crime analysis centers, real time crime centers, gun and gang violence intelligence centers, and purge the attendant databases.
- Withdraw participation in police militarization programs and refuse federal grants that entangle municipal police entities with the Department of Homeland Security, the Joint Terrorism Task Force, and FBI.
- Prohibit training exchanges between U.S. law enforcement and global military and policing entities. These relationships circulate deadly techniques and technologies, exporting the American model of racist policing worldwide.
- Repeal all laws that hide, excuse, or enable police misconduct.

3 // REMOVE POLICE FROM SCHOOLS.



- Remove police, both public and private, from all schools.
- Call on universities to dissolve relationships with police departments.
- Prohibit police departments from using city contracts with universities to do IRB-exempt data analysis, geographic and community profiling, human-computer amelioration studies, and predictive analytics. Instead, divert funds to public service-related studies and community collaborations.
- Remove surveillance tech and metal detectors from all schools.
- End school zero-tolerance disciplinary policies.
- End the use of carceral-lite punishment of students, including suspensions and expulsions, that disproportionately target Black and brown students, especially Black girls.
- Urge states to repeal truancy laws.
- Prohibit the surveillance of Black and brown students by their teachers, counselors, and school officials through programs that criminalize students and exploit relationships of trust with school officials, including Countering Violent Extremism/Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention.

4 // FREE PEOPLE FROM PRISONS AND JAILS.



- Permanently close local jails.
- Pressure state legislatures to end mandatory arrest and failure to protect laws that lead to the criminalization of survivors of gendered violence.
- Reject “alternatives to incarceration” that are carceral in nature, including problem-solving courts and electronic monitoring and coercive restorative justice programs.
- Reduce jail churn by reducing arrests.
- Free all people from involuntary confinement, including but not limited to jails, prisons, immigrant detention centers, psychiatric wards, and nursing homes, starting with vulnerable populations such as those who are aging, disabled, immunocompromised, held on bail, held for parole violations, and survivors.
- Cut funding to prosecutor offices.
- End pre-trial detention.
- End civil commitment.
- Release all people held pre-trial and on parole violations.
- Make all communication to and from prisoners free.
- End immigration detention, end family separation, and let our undocumented community members come home.
 - End data and resource sharing with ICE.

5 // REPEAL LAWS THAT CRIMINALIZE SURVIVAL



- Repeal local ordinances that criminalize people involved in the sex trades, drug trades, and street economies.
- Call on Mayors to grant clemencies to criminalized survivors of violence.
- Repeal local ordinances that criminalize the occupation of public spaces—particularly for people experiencing homelessness—under statutes against loitering, loitering for the purposes of sex work, fare beating, panhandling, soliciting, camping, sleeping, and public urination and defecation.
 - Refuse to deploy police when they are contacted in relation to the above.
- Repeal statutes that criminalize survivors of gendered violence, including mandatory arrest and failure to protect laws.
- On the road to complete decriminalization, immediately decriminalize all misdemeanor offenses, which currently account for 80% of total court dockets.
- End all fines and fees associated with the criminal legal process, including ticketing, cash bail, court costs, and parole and probation fees.

6 // INVEST IN COMMUNITY SELF-GOVERNANCE



- Promote neighborhood councils as representative bodies within municipal decision making.
- Invest in multilingual resources for immigrant and asylum-seeking communities.
- Assess community needs and invest in community-based resources, including groups from tenant unions to local shop-owners and street vendors, prioritizing those from marginalized groups.
- Invest in community-based public safety approaches, including non-carceral violence prevention and intervention programs and skills-based education on bystander intervention, consent and boundaries, and healthy relationships.

7 // PROVIDE SAFE, ACCESSIBLE HOUSING FOR EVERYONE



- Cancel rent without burden of repayment during COVID-19.
- Repurpose empty buildings, houses, apartments, and hotels to house people experiencing homelessness.
- Prohibit evictions.
- Provide unequivocal support and resources to refugee and asylum seeking communities.
- Allow Community Benefits Agreements to be a community governed means of urban planning. Make public housing accessible to everyone, repealing discriminatory laws barring people from accessing resources based on income, race, gender, sexuality, immigration status, or history of incarceration.
- Support and promote the existence of community land trusts for Black and historically displaced communities.
- Remove cops from all re-entry and shelter institutions.
- Ensure that survivors of gendered violence have access to alternative housing options in the event that their primary housing becomes unsafe.
- Provide non-coercive housing options for young people experiencing abuse or family rejection of their queer or trans identities.

8 // FULLY INVEST IN CARE, NOT COPS



- Allocate city funding towards healthcare infrastructure (including non-coercive mental healthcare), wellness resources, neighborhood based trauma centers, non-coercive drug and alcohol treatment programming, peer support networks, and training for healthcare professionals. Make these services available for free to low-income residents. Adopt a care not cops model.
- Invest in teachers and counselors, universal childcare, and support for all family structures.
- Free and accessible public transit.
- End the use of property taxes to determine school funding.
- Install safe and sanitary gender-inclusive public restrooms.
- Ensure investment in community-based food banks, grocery cooperatives, gardens, and farms.
- Ensure free, and more extensive, public transport, especially servicing marginalized and lower-income communities.
- Invest in youth programs that promote learning, safety, and community care.

HOW TO USE THIS

This is an offering for abolitionist vision and transformation. Although there are many policies here, this is not a policy document or website, nor are we an organization or policymakers. We hope this serves as a resource for people to build from and incorporate abolitionist demands into local organizing efforts around municipal, state, and federal policies. Originally, this resource was formed as a direct response to a harmful reformist campaign.

We know abolition is far more transformative than 8 points or a website, and hope that these points serve as a resource that demonstrates practical changes we can make now towards abolition. If you or a campaign you're a part of uses this to shape city based-campaigns, let us know by contacting us!

CAMPAIGNS

Care Not Cops | carenotcops.org

No New Jails NYC Abolition Plan | nonewjails.nyc

No New Jails DC | bit.ly/nnjdc

Close the Jails ATL | closethejailatl.org

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Transform Harm Resource Hub | transformharm.org

Justice LA COVID-19 Decarceration Proposal | justicelanow.org

Policing, Prisons, and Punishment Resource Guide | Micah Herskind, medium.com

"Police Industrial Complex" Primer from Carceral Tech Resistance Network | carceral.tech

We Came to Learn: A Call for Police-Free Schools | advancementproject.org/wecametolearn

Reformist Reforms vs. Abolitionist Steps in Policing | criticalresistance.org

Collective Action for Safe Spaces 2018 Policy Platform | collectiveactiondc.org

She Safe, We Safe Campaign | shesafewesafe.org

What the Prison-Abolition Movement Wants | Kim Kelly, teenvogue.com

Beyond Bars: Prison Abolition Should Be the American Dream | Reina Sultan, bitchmedia.org

Thinking about how to abolish prisons with Mariame Kaba: Podcast & Transcript | NBC News
Police "Reforms" You Should Always Oppose | Mariame Kaba, truthout.org

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