



# Metropolitan Area Recovery Calm House M.A.R.C.H

Every resident deserves safe spaces to heal. If a facility like MARCH was provided for me upon my re entry, I would have been able to have a support system in a safe place helping me heal with my past traumas. I would have felt more comfortable dealing with my drug addiction around positive people. I would have had the resources which would have prevented me from being a recidivism statistic. MARCH will help people struggling with substance use disorder, victims of violence, or persons in a mental health crisis.

## The Problem

People who have survived violence, substance use disorder, or are experiencing a mental health crisis are often presented with only two bad options – **the hospital or jail.**

## The Impact

- 🌸 Emergency service agencies receive **200 million 911 calls** each year.
- 🌸 Mental illness costs the U.S. economy **\$193.2 billion in lost earnings** every year.
- 🌸 **44%** of people in jail have a **mental health diagnosis.**
- 🌸 2% women in state suffers with PTSD and 3% in federal.
- 🌸 Jails are not equipped to address health challenges.

## The Solution:

**DC should fund a short-term residential whole-person wellness home so they can heal in a safe, supportive, and culturally appropriate environment.**

By October 2026, DC should fund 4 MARCH wellness facilities, one in each of the four quadrants of the city, operated by local non profit organizations.

There are only **sixteen** community-based crisis beds (all in SE) where people can stay for a week or two to receive professional mental health services.

## Read More:

**Coalition seeks to overhaul DC emergency response to mental health crises - The Washington Post**



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# Mothers of Power



Fighting to give parents and children in foster care more time together to help reunify separated families.

Children in foster care and their parents/caregivers suffer unnecessary trauma when they are separated and only get to visit for one hour a week under supervision.

## The Impact:

- In 2022, an average of 437 families were served by DC Child and Family Services Agency in foster care.
- In 2022, an average of 79% of children in foster care in DC were Black.
- In 2022, CFSA had a budget of over \$216 million and over 730 full-time employees (FTEs).
- Its already hard having your kids taken away. It's even harder when you only get to see them for an hour. I know the courts sometimes think this is in the best interest of the child, but in my experience it is traumatizing and has negative effects on childrens' mental health. My kids were removed from my home for 2 years and the separation is still impacting them, even though they've been back with me for 11 years and are now adults.
- Making sure parents and children can spend time together in natural settings every day will give them hope, improve mental health, and increase the chances of successful reunification.
- "Although there is no generally accepted way to structure family time to optimize chances for reunification, families that spend time together regularly have a greater likelihood of timely reunification, and frequent family connections may also decrease depression, anxiety, and externalizing problem behaviors in children. - [Casey Family Foundation](#)

52 hours per year is the default amount of time parents get to spend with their - that's not even 3 days a year!



## The Solution:

Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) should change the default of visitation from one supervised hour per week to **daily and unsupervised** unless contrary to the best interest of the child. DC should require that visitation be in the **most natural setting possible** unless contrary to the best interest of the child.

DC should give CFSA enough funding in Fiscal Year 2024 to:

- 1) hire more family support workers to transport children and families to daily visits and
- 2) create a natural home-like environment for families to spend time together.



Contact:


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# The Detention Compensation Act

Reparations for people who are detained pre-trial but never found guilty of a crime.

## The Problem

Pretrial detention system is people who are factually and legally presumed innocent are held pretrial without bond. Which causes immediate harm that is prevalent but preventable. Pretrial detention causes immediate harm to many people who are never actually convicted of a crime. People can be put in jail for days, months, or even years then be acquitted or have their cases dismissed. And Black people are the most harmed.



People often lose their jobs and resources while incarcerated for a few days or even just a few hours.

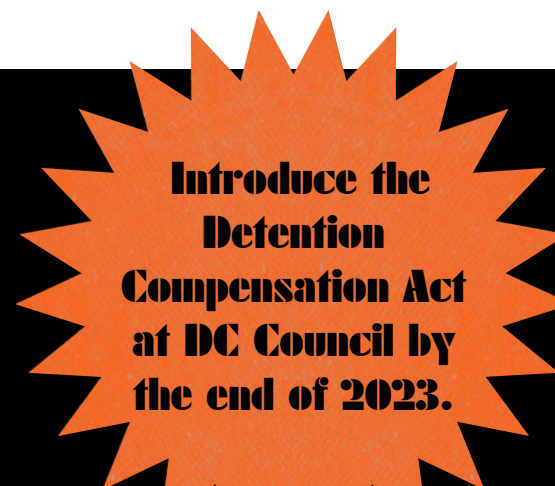
## The Impact:

Black people are the most impacted by these policies. Black people are disproportionately represented in DC Jail. 92% of DC jail residents are Black and 60% of them are being held pre-trial. People often lose their jobs and resources while incarcerated for a few days or even just a few hours.

In October 2019, the Jails and Justice Task Force reported that more than 1,800 people in 2018 were detained for over a week pre-trial at the Department of Corrections (DOC) but then released without a guilty plea or conviction. According to the DC Pretrial Services Agency, between 2017 and 2021, people spent an average of 131 days awaiting trial. Post-covid, that average increased to 214 days.

## The Solution

**DC should compensate anyone who is detained for even one night for their time if they are found not guilty of a crime or their case is dismissed. Anyone held for more than 7 days in DOC custody who is released without a conviction should be compensated for loss of wages, etc.**



**Introduce the Detention Compensation Act at DC Council by the end of 2023.**

# YOU CAN'T GET WELL IN A CELL

**Decriminalize  
Substance Use  
Disorders**

DC Pretrial Services Agency has implemented drug testing as a determining factor for pretrial detention or initial release. Pretrial detention removes members of the DC community for an indeterminate amount of time, whether they are “guilty” or not. DC PSA’s use of drug testing to determine an individual’s “risk” to the community does not address the crisis of substance use disorders (SUDs) in the District. The District’s criminal justice system is still rooted in War on Drugs policing.

**THE CRIMINALIZATION  
OF DRUGS IS DIRECTLY  
ROOTED IN WHITE  
SUPREMACY.**

## **THE IMPACT:**

DC residents with SUDs are met with penalization rather than effective treatment and community care. The further criminalization of SUDs.



## **THE SOLUTION**

An amendment to the District’s criminal statutes will address the harms caused by the criminalization of SUDs and instill a culture of community care — ringing true to DC values.

Decrim Poverty DC’s proposed District of Columbia Drug Policy Reform Act of 2021 (DPRA) legislation addresses:

- **Decriminalization and Enhancing Connections to Services**
- **Reduce Reincarceration, Collateral Consequences, and Civil Rights**
- **Strengthening the Harm Reduction Safety Net**
- **Repairing Harms of Past Criminalization**
- **Reducing Criminalization in Drug Cases**
- **Improving Public Access to Information**

In August 2020, the Council for Court Excellence published a report on behalf of the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor (ODCA) outlining the District’s failure to address the intersection of substance use disorders and incarceration.

- Criminalizing folks for SUDs is not only dehumanizing and rooted in fear mongering (rooted in anti-Blackness), it is also extremely costly and ineffective in providing treatment and reducing recidivism
- Most folks released on pretrial detention return for their court dates
- Pre-arrest diversion lightens the load for pretrial detention
  - It would nip the issue in the bud ahead of it becoming a problem

**“A system that never addresses the why behind a harm never actually contains the harm itself. Cages confine people, not the conditions that facilitate their harms or the mentalities that perpetuate violence.”**

-Mariame Kaba



# THE ROAD HOME DOESN'T HAVE TO BE SO LONG!

## Why Are DC Residents Forced So Far Away From Home?

45% of incarcerated DC residents that are trapped in the Federal Bureau of Prison (FBOP) are over 500 miles from home. That distance causes a **breakdown in family relations** and creates **unsafe mental health conditions**, which makes it **difficult to be successful** in daily programs and reentry.

dc policy center

## THE IMPACT

- Over 90% of incarcerated D.C. residents are minority/black.
- This distance hinders family communication, visitation and morale support. It strains mental health stability.
- This distance causes hurt and grief for families of the incarcerated. Some are children, parents, husbands, wives and siblings. There is a ripple effect. Our communities lack leaders, fathers, mothers!! Children are growing up without their parents.
- Having the incarcerated 150 miles or closer helps build family bonds, conversation of guidance, it strengthens family values, learned empathy, and shared hobbies. Which all creates healthy lifestyle habits.

**"WHEN D.C. PRISONERS ARE HELD IN FACILITIES HUNDREDS OF MILES FROM HOME, THEY SAY, REHABILITATION AND RE-ENTRY BECOME MORE CHALLENGING."**

*Martin Auster Muhle - D.C. Inmates Serve Time Hundreds Of Miles From Home. Is It Time To Bring Them Back?  
WAMU*

According to the Vera Institute of Justice (Family Justice Program) Regardless of their sentencing status or length of incarceration, jailed men and women indicated they relied on family and friends to support them and assist in planning for reentering the community. Their stated reentry needs, besides emotional support while in jail, included housing, employment, and child care, and they said they anticipated relying on their loved ones throughout the process of reentry. Among the many types of support that participants received or expected to receive from their families, the most commonly voiced were the expectations that their families would help them stay drug free and meet their parole obligations.

## THE SOLUTION:

**Congress should pass H.R.3339 - Improving Reentry for District of Columbia Residents in the Bureau of Prisons Act of 2023 with an amendment to limit the distance to 150 driving miles.**

D.C. Residents, Family and Friends it's our time!! Lets stand for our people. Join together and place your signatures on this petition!! Let's band together and make a difference. There are over 1000 of our friends and family away from home needing healthy communication and emotional support. Let's show Them **WE CARE!!**

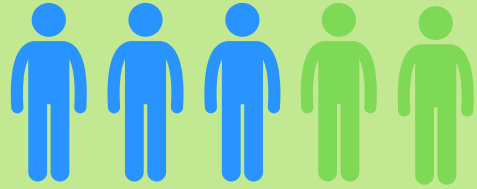
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# A SUCCESSFUL SECOND CHANGE

## Using the District Opportunity to Purchase Act to Increase Affordable Housing for Returning Citizens



Nearly 3 out of 5 people in DC who have been incarcerated experience homelessness because returning citizens face unique barriers to housing.

# THE IMPACT:

- Returning citizens are more likely to return to incarceration when they do not have access to stable housing. Providing more quality, affordable housing across DC would increase public safety by reducing crime and recidivism.
  - Research has shown that housing insecurity is associated with an increased risk of recidivism (Jacobs & Gottlieb, 2020).
  - According to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (2022) it is important for the District to consider further expanding stable and affordable housing opportunities for returning citizens to reduce recidivism and allow for successful reintegration.

# 57%

Fifty-seven percent of people who are homeless in DC have been incarcerated (Coventry, 2020). The number of homeless adults, including those who are returning citizens, grew by 35 percent in DC in the last year (Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, 2022-2023).

# THE SOLUTION:

- DC should use the **District Opportunity Purchase Act (DOPA)** to purchase vacant buildings and give them to community based organizations that will create **affordable, immediate, and stable housing** for returning citizens.
  - Use the building to create housing for returning citizens where the **first year is rent-free** for the residents
  - Work with clients while they are **still incarcerated** to begin the process of reentry (documentation, healthcare, bank account)
  - Provide **wrap around services** (job/life coaching, referral system, wellness)
  - Require residents to begin the process of **obtaining an income** (employment, social assistance, etc.) after 30 days of coming home

**In 2024, DC Government should purchase at least 200 apartment units and sell them for \$1 to community-based organizations that agree to the criteria listed above using DOPA.**

**THE NATIONAL REENTRY  
NETWORK FOR RETURNING  
CITIZENS**

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# FROM POLICE BRUTALITY TO MENTAL HEALTH

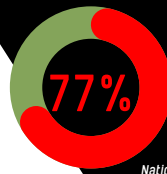
## ADDRESSING THE SYSTEMIC INJUSTICES AGAINST BLACK COMMUNITIES

## THE PROBLEM:

Marginalized groups, especially Black people are disproportionately harmed and negatively impacted by the responses of law enforcement and the Department of Behavioral Health Services to mental health crises.

## THE IMPACT:

- National figures show that forty four percent of people in jail have a mental health diagnosis, more than a third of whom are estimated to be Black.
- Multiple agencies in DC including the Department of Behavioral Health and MPD have been unsuccessful at implementing DC's crisis response team due to staffing and training challenges. Currently there are only sixteen community-based crisis beds available to serve across the eight wards in DC.
- In FY22, a fraction of the projected number of eligible calls are being diverted to DBH instead of referral to MPD or FEMS. In FY22, a total of 327 calls were diverted to DBH, of which 90 (28%) resulted in a referral to CRT. Thus, more than 70% of calls are resolved through telephone-only support.



77% of Black people said, they were reluctant to call the new 988 crisis line because they were afraid that they or a loved one could be hurt by the police intervening in a mental health crisis. The same survey showed that Black people were **almost twice** as likely as white people to say that mental health services should be the highest priority for federal funding (42% vs. 23 percent).

National Alliance on Mental Illness

# 1,023

people have been **shot and killed by police** in the past 12 months. The Post has tracked 8,643 fatal police shootings since 2015.



**Eight in ten** voters support 911 calls for mental health and substance use crises going to health professionals.

## THE SOLUTION:

**DC should fund a community based peer-led team to respond to mental health crises that prioritize mental health and well-being, and that do not further perpetuate systemic inequality.**

DC should grant out ten million dollars annually to community-based response teams across all eight wards starting in Fiscal Year 2024. DC should also supply the community response teams with eight dedicated vans for transportation. DBH will train community members in the areas of AED/CPR/First Aid Certifications, Mental Health First Aid for youths and adults, peer support and crisis response training.

# CONTACT

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Chosen Few/HIPS  
Community Organizer

REENTRY IS GOOD.

# BUT NO ENTRY IS BETTER!

Incentivizing youth to perform civic engagement will increase public safety.

DC should fund a pilot program in Ward 7 for five families or 10 children to foster a culture of civic engagement through hospitable interaction and chores for neighbors, building community and public safety one block at a time.

Too many black and brown kids are justice involved because they lack intergenerational relationships that build civic engagement and community involvement.

96%

Of the kids committed to DYRS are **Black or brown.**

[courtexcellence.org](http://courtexcellence.org)

- There were **1,401 kids** arrested in DC in 2021.
- The cost to incarcerate a young person in DC is \$621 per day. ([justicepolicy.org](http://justicepolicy.org))
- Building community connections with neighbors is proven to reduce harmful behaviors. (*The Tools of the Trade*)

In Fiscal Year 2025, DC should grant out \$100,000 of funding for a pilot program that targets five families and/or 10 children, and five businesses in Ward 7.

By contrast, DC spends \$226k per year to incarcerate one youth.

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FAMILIES  
DESERVE TO  
KNOW WHAT  
HAPPENED

WHY NOT

# FULL FOOTAGE FOR FAMILIES



## THE PROBLEM:

DC government limits the information it shares when someone is killed by the police with families, it prevents families like my own to understand what happened, heal, and prevents us from trusting police in our marginalized communities. Families have to try and piece together exactly what happened on the day our loved ones live ended.

## THE IMPACT:

What kind of people are hurt? How are they hurt? How many people are hurt? Why should this matter to the target? Some of my facts This impacts black families etc. personal story if I would like. Black people are killed at a disproportionate rate, "almost three times more likely" to be killed by police than a white person 21 Black men killed by MPD between 2018-2023



**Under MPD's current leadership, the annual number of complaints of police misconduct reached an all-time high of 780 in 2018**



This impacts and hurts the entire DC community; and particularly urban marginalized communities. Between 2018 and 2023 police have killed 21 Black people. The Washington Post reported, "MPD has a collective budget of over \$600 million dollars per year and its over-policing of Black communities has resulted in one of the highest racial disparities in police killings in the country."

**Black neighborhoods are heavily saturated and Black residents are specially targeted. Between July 22 and December 31, 2019, after legislation and a court order, MPD collected data on an astonishing 63,000 police stops.**



An initiative cracking down on gun crimes in the District targeted three predominantly Black wards and was not enforced citywide as announced, U.S. prosecutors acknowledged in court records, drawing attacks that the policy disproportionately subjected African American defendants to lengthier prison terms. At the time, D.C. Police Chief Peter Newsham said he was unaware the initiative was being implemented in only certain parts of the District.

**It is difficult to assess what, if any, bias or negligence contributed to deaths caused by MPD, without more information and evidence from District leadership. Strategically, the city has publicly disclosed the minimum evidence required by law in body camera footage.**



Much like the killings by Kyle Rittenhouse in Wisconsin and George Zimmerman in Florida, the central concern here is not only whether the shooter had to defend himself, but whether the shooter created the situation in which he had to defend himself.

## The Solution:

Currently DC's Body Camera Footage Legislation requires the public release of the footage involving deadly force by MPD. In addition to the release of the footage; DC should also release all footage from all officers, before, during, and after the incident. The family should also receive; death cert and the option of an independent autopsy.

**"Hide nothing from the masses of our people. Tell no lies. Expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories..."**

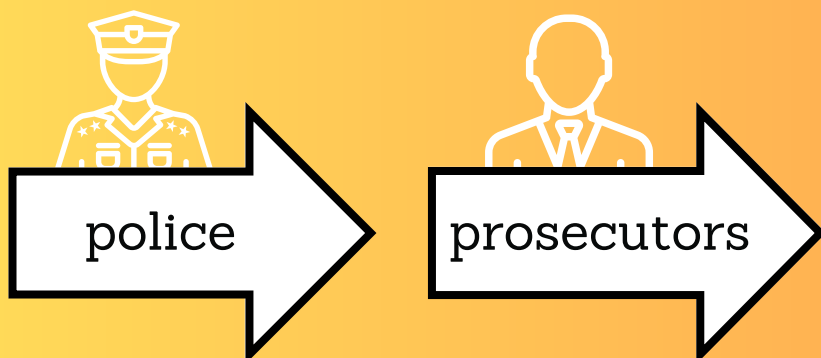
AMILCAR CABRAL

# Detention is NOT Prevention:

## End Pretrial Detention DC



The carceral system goes from:

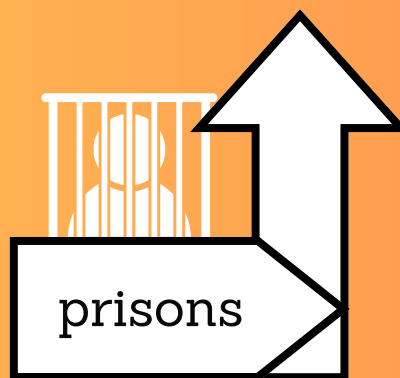


**Less than 2% of people are re-arrested for violent offenses when they are on pretrial release**

### THE SOLUTION

Legislators must create laws based on facts, not feelings. The facts are: that less than 2% of people are re-arrested for violent offenses when they are on pretrial release. Solutions should be narrowly tailored to address those who are committing harm instead of blanket solutions that fuel mass incarceration. Council should not move forward with ANY permanent legislation that expands pretrial detention for youth and adults.

**When people are held pretrial, before they have been convicted of a crime, it disrupts and puts their livelihood and families at risk.**



**90% of people held at DC jail are Black, 53% are being held without a conviction.**

### THE ISSUE

Holding more people in cells actually does not keep us safe. DC Legislators misrepresented the data from Pretrial services and as a result are using outdated "tough on crime" tactics to create an illusion of safety..

[There were] "over 100 cases where people were charged with a crime of violence, released pretrial and recommitted another violent offense".

-Brook Pinto, Committee Chair

**WRONG**

