

Guild Notes

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NLG's Tri-Annual Membership Newsletter,
for Jailhouse Lawyer Members & Beyond



*Photo above taken outside of Brooklyn Public Library Bedford Branch in March 2026, displaying an exhibition focused on *The Warehouse*, a book which is reviewed inside this issue.*

Table of Contents

<i>Welcome to New Jailhouse Lawyer Members.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>2025 Voting Results.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>NLG Statements:</i>	
<i>NLG + NLG MN Condemns the Unchecked Violence of ICE Agents.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>NLG Condemns US Imperialist Aggression against Venezuela.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>NLG Condemns DHS's Violence and Killings.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>NLG Announcements:</i>	
<i>2026 Week of Abolition, March 2-6: Abolish ICE.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>2026 Haywood Burns Fellows.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>2026 #Law4ThePeople Honorees.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Beyond Bars Submissions:</i>	
<i>3 Rules for Jailhouse Lawyers.....</i>	<i>10-11</i>
<i>In Pursuit of Rehabilitation.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>MDOC Body-Worn Cameras.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Interstate Compact Contract.....</i>	<i>13-14</i>
<i>Book Review: The Warehouse: A Visual Primer on Mass Incarceration.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Outside Subscriptions for Incarcerated Members.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Prison Policy Initiative Reprint: Following the Money of Mass Incarceration in 2026....</i>	<i>16-19</i>
<i>2026 Voting:</i>	
<i>Voting Form.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Resolution on U.S. Violations of International Law in the Western Hemisphere.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Amendment to Bylaw 8.12.....</i>	<i>22</i>

Welcome to New Jailhouse Lawyer Members

If you are receiving this newsletter, that means that we have received your request to be added as a member. We are a membership association of lawyers, law students, legal workers, and jailhouse lawyers. Membership is open to anyone incarcerated who writes to the NLG National Office expressing their interest in becoming a member, and there is no cost. Membership lasts for three years, after which you can write to us again to let us know to renew and if you have a different mailing address. Formerly incarcerated members have the option to annually renew their membership once they are released, with a waiver if needed. Your membership will be as a national member, not affiliated with a local chapter.

NLG Membership Consists of:

- Subscription to *Guild Notes*, which comes out 2 or 3 times a year
- The *Jailhouse Lawyers Handbook* (currently 2021 edition - write to us if you need one!)
- Opportunity to submit writing to the “Beyond Bars” column in *Guild Notes*:

When submitting, think about what in your experience as a jailhouse lawyer might be beneficial to share with other jailhouse lawyers around the country. Drawing upon personal experience as an illustration of a broader topic is encouraged. There is a word limit of around 750 words. You can send to: GN Submissions, National Lawyers Guild, PO Box 1266, New York, NY 10009. (Please also let us know if you would like your full name published). Unfortunately, we cannot write back to everyone who sends us an article, and there is no guarantee that an article will be published. We do, though, appreciate every submission we receive, and all give us insight that we wouldn't otherwise have of what is going on inside the prison walls.

- Ability to vote in our annual elections on bylaws/resolutions

Beyond these, the NLG staff do not have capacity to facilitate further benefits, including:

- Membership cards
- Access to legal representation or to have a lawyer read through your legal documents
- Ability to return any legal documents you send to us back to you or to anyone else
- Marking either *Guild Notes*, the *Jailhouse Lawyers Handbook*, or any other mail as “legal mail”, as we are not a law office and not acting in any representative capacity

2025 Voting Results

Resolution of Membership for the Immediate Removal of the National Lawyers Guild Executive Director, Jo Santiago: PASSED (60.5% YES, 21% NO, 18.5% ABSTAIN)

Resolution of Membership for the Immediate Removal of the NLG Executive Council: PASSED (64% YES, 19% NO, 17% ABSTAIN)

Resolution Of The National Lawyers Guild Supporting The Integration Of Animal Rights Into Its Social Justice Advocacy: PASSED (66% YES, 17% NO, 17% ABSTAIN)

Emergency Resolution on Domestic Misuse of Military: PASSED (91% YES, 1% NO, 8% ABSTAIN)

Amendment to Constitution Article 5.1: Composition of the NEC : PASSED (78%, 6% NO, 16% ABSTAIN)

Amendment to Constitution Article 5.6: Duties of National Executive Committee: PASSED (78% YES, 5% NO, 17% ABSTAIN)

Amendment to Constitution Article 5.8: Executive Council Action between Meetings: PASSED (79% YES, 6% NO, 15% ABSTAIN)

Amendment to Constitution Article 5.10: Removal from Office: PASSED (77% YES, 8% NO, 15% ABSTAIN)

Amendment to add Constitutional Article 5.12: EC and NEC Meeting Procedures: PASSED (79% YES, 5% NO, 16% ABSTAIN)

NLG Statements

NLG + NLG MN Condemns the Unchecked Violence of ICE Agents (January 8, 2026)

To the people of Minneapolis. To the people of the Twin Cities. To the people of Minnesota.

Once again the eyes of the world are on our city. ICE murdered Renee Nicole Good. An ICE agent stood in front of her car and shot her through the windshield. She died there. Blocks from her home. In her own words, Renee Nicole Good was a poet and writer and wife and mom and shitty guitar strummer. She was a member of our community. We grieve her loss and feel your anger that she was taken and that she is gone.

This is a harrowing reminder that ICE continues to terrorize Americans and immigrants. This killing is an escalation of ICE's violence, which shot and killed an immigrant in Chicago, Illinois, and in Northridge, California, an off-duty ICE agent shot and killed Keith Porter during a New Year's celebration. ICE also had a record number of deaths inside facilities that house immigrants in 2025.

What the Trump administration attempts to do with its violent response and rhetoric is to scare people from exercising their right to assemble and observe, even if it means killing. Both President Trump and VP JD Vance have also blamed Renee for the ICE agent's use of deadly force against her. Then, in the wake of public outcry, the FBI issued notice that it would be the sole investigator of the incident and not allow the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension access to critical case documents. These are attempts by the federal government to deter dissent, infiltrate the justice system, and paint anyone against the use of force and violence as an "enemy".

The Trump administration is using the language of "domestic terrorism" to justify killing someone for protecting their neighborhood by legally monitoring ICE activity, and to provide excuses for these agents' actions. While it is not a new tactic, it is a disturbing level of brazenness and lies coming from an administration that characterizes anyone who opposes its actions as "domestic terrorists". The actions taken by ICE, and the lack of accountability for the agent's actions, show that ICE has been empowered to carry out "street justice" solely at the discretion of agents who have been documented acting illegally throughout their raids. ICE is carrying out its racist mission to terrorize communities, separate families, and punish anyone who dares fight for immigrants.

The NLG and its members stand in solidarity with Renee's loved ones. And we stand in solidarity with the people of Minneapolis, who have unwaveringly continued to protect their neighbors and bravely document ICE's campaign of terror. We echo calls to abolish ICE, and for their agents to be held responsible for their violence.

NLG Statements

NLG Condemns US Imperialist Aggression against Venezuela (January 6, 2026)

The NLG joins the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL) in condemning in the strongest and most unequivocal terms the US bombing of Caracas as well as the attacks on Miranda, La Guaira, and Aragua. We also express our outrage that Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores, have been kidnapped and removed from Venezuela by the US government.

These attacks constitute flagrant violations of several fundamental principles of international law, in particular Articles 1 and 2 of the UN Charter. Most seriously, they amount to a grave violation of Article 2(4), which requires States “to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations”. They constitute illegal aggression, which was considered the supreme international crime at Nuremberg. And they violate the right of the people of Venezuela to self-determination, which is guaranteed by Article 1(2) of the UN Charter.

The real objective of this military assault is not to carry out a ‘law enforcement operation’. Nor is it in support of democracy and human rights. The objective is the violent seizure of Venezuela’s strategic wealth, above all its oil and underground resources. It is also the latest example of the US’s attempt to undermine Venezuelan sovereignty, independence, and right to self-determination. Such acts represent a direct threat to other countries that are not aligned with US foreign policy in the region.

These are classic colonial war methods: economic strangulation, political destabilization, and open military force, all packaged under the fraudulent language of “regime change.” The ground for this crime of aggression was prepared long in advance—through political sabotage, international legitimization of reactionary figures such as ‘Nobel Peace Prize’ laureate María Corina Machado, and open threats issued by Donald Trump and his imperialist entourage.

These acts of aggression cannot be viewed in isolation. Alongside the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the growing instability deliberately manufactured across entire regions by imperialist powers, it reflects the ongoing attempts to undermine and dismantle post war international legal framework. The selective application of law, the normalization of international crimes, and the systematic impunity enjoyed by imperialist states—led by the United States and its allies—have pushed global peace and security to the edge of catastrophe.

The NLG stands in solidarity with the Venezuelan people in the face of US aggression and calls upon the international community, the United Nations, in particular the UN Security Council, and all UN member states, to take all necessary steps to stop immediately the military aggression on Venezuela and hold the US and its accomplices accountable for their crimes once and for all.

The NLG also calls upon the peoples of the world to raise their voices, mobilize, and stand against imperialist war and intervention.

We reaffirm that sovereignty and self-determination stand above imperialist military force. Justice does not stand with aggressors, occupiers, or war criminals—it stands with the peoples who resist.

End the Imperialist Intervention!
Long Live the Sovereignty of Peoples!

NLG Statements

NLG Condemns DHS's Violence and Killings (February 19, 2026)

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) continues its violent practices, resulting in death across the U.S. Their actions are impacting the lives of everyday people, our neighbors, and immigrant communities. NLG members from our Portland chapter, alongside the ACLU, won a Temporary Restraining Order against ICE's widespread use of chemical weapons. In Chicago, federal agents used chemical weapons at least 49 times on protesters, in violation of orders from judges. Earlier this week, Immigration Customs and Enforcement's (ICE) actions led to the death of Linda Davis, a school teacher in Georgia. This is the latest in a string of deaths related to DHS's, ICE's, and Customs and Border Patrol's (CBP) campaign of terror.

Keith Porter was murdered at his apartment complex in Northridge, California, after an off-duty ICE agent shot and killed him. ICE shot Alfredo Alejandro Aljorna and Julio Cesar Sosa-Celis, hitting one of them in the leg, after accusing them of assaulting an agent. It turned out they lied under oath. In Chicago, Silvero Villegas-Gonzalez was shot and killed by ICE, after initial reports claimed the ICE agent feared for his life. News reports claim that the ICE agent described his own injuries as "nothing major".

Renee Nicole Good was killed by ICE in her car for doing the constitutionally protected action of observing law enforcement. Alex Pretti was also killed in broad daylight by CBP officers, because he was recording them. These incidents are not an anomaly. They are designed to cause terror and fear. The message is clear: DHS, ICE, and CBP agents can get away with any violence, and the Trump administration is happy to let them do it.

This is an escalation of who is deserving of violence: since 2004, ICE has been responsible for over 250 deaths inside of its cages. Over 30 occurred just last year, making it one of the deadliest years in ICE detention. The majority of these deaths go underreported, likely because the typical victims of ICE are Black and brown immigrants. Nonetheless, the outrage even reached the 2026 Winter Olympics, where ICE agents were strangely assisting with security in Italy.

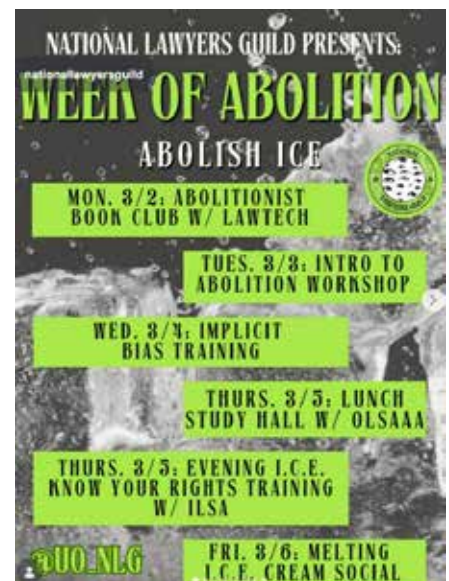
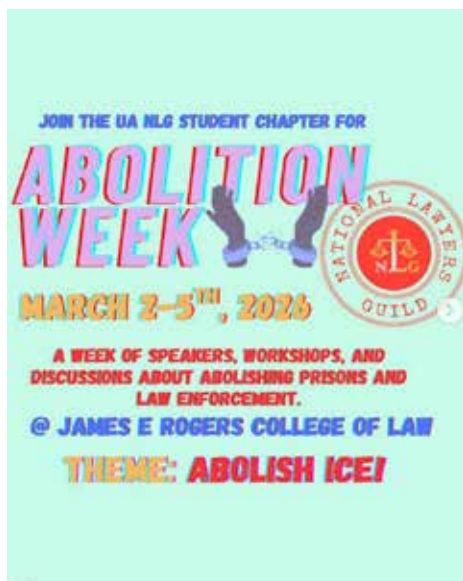
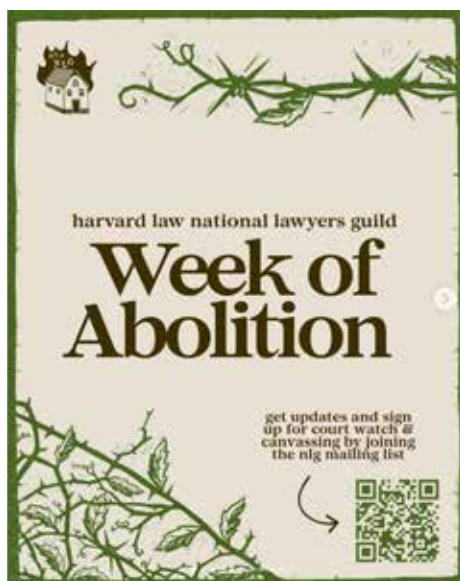
The NLG emphasizes that what we are experiencing today is part of a U.S. legacy of anti-Black and anti-indigenous State violence, met with impunity throughout history. Additionally, the normalization of imperialist horrors that we see in Gaza, Venezuela and elsewhere continue to lay the groundwork for domestic, unfettered State repression.

The NLG continues its calls to abolish ICE and to end the occupation of our cities. We demand that these masked agents immediately stop the State-directed racial profiling, excessive force, wrongful detainment, and killings of civilians, regardless of their immigration or citizenship status.

NLG Announcements

2026 Week of Abolition, March 2-6: Abolish ICE

In honor of NLG's resolutions to abolish prisons (2016) and abolish the police (2020), the Guild holds an annual student Week of Abolition (WOA) to reflect the Guild's commitment to finding alternatives to current systems of incarceration and policing. For the 2026 Week of Abolition (March 2-6), NLG law school chapters organized events and actions related to the abolition of prisons and police. Given the ongoing escalated attacks on immigrant communities and the huge expansion of ICE by the Trump administration, the 2026 WOA theme was "ABOLISH ICE." Dozens of NLG student chapters at law schools across the country organized WOA events.



NLG Announcements



The NLG National Office is thrilled to introduce our 2026 Haywood Burns Fellowship recipients!

The Fellowships sponsor law students and legal workers to spend the summer working with NLG-aligned organizations or law firms whose mission is in line with the Guild's commitment to prioritizing people and ecosystems over property interests.

Jishan Ahmed is a 2L at George Washington Law University. As a Haywood Burns Fellow, Jishan will be at Cohen and Green, where he will work with civil rights attorneys fighting against police brutality and advocating for the dignity of incarcerated individuals.

Shannon Copeland is a criminal justice reform advocate, speaker, and educator-in-training. After surviving a wrongful conviction, Shannon spent over 15 years incarcerated. She serves in leadership with Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants (CURE), where she will be undertaking her Haywood Burns fellowship work.

Makena Lambert is a second-year student at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law. As a Haywood Burns Fellow, Makena will work with the Immigration Defense Unit of the San Francisco Public Defender's Office, with the hope of learning best practices for effective advocacy at the intersection of immigration and criminal defense.

JaDashia "Dae" Mark is committed to movement lawyering, labor justice, and political education in the U.S. South. As a Haywood Burns Fellow, Dae will spend the summer with Project South supporting movement-based work that integrates legal resources, political education, and organizing across the South.

Leela Marques de Paula is a 2L at the CUNY School of Law. As a Haywood Burns Fellow, she will work with the Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights to support the unprecedented trial challenging the way the Southern legal system enables systemic violence against Black transgender women, and conducting movement research framing this struggle as a critical front in the internationalist resistance against rising global authoritarianism.

NLG Announcements



Each year, we honor members and allies whose work embodies extraordinary commitment to our mission of human rights over property interests. The work that our honorees do helps us get closer to a more just and fair world. This year we will honor:

Katherine Franke: Law For The People Award:

Katherine Franke is the James L. Dohr Professor of Law (retired) at Columbia University. She is among the nation's leading scholars writing on law, sexuality race, and religion drawing from feminist, queer, and critical race theory. Professor Franke currently serves on the Advisory Board of Palestine Legal, the editorial board of GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies, and on the Advisory Board of Columbia University's Center for Justice. She was also the National Director of the NLG from 1990-1991. Her publications include two books, *Wedlocked: The Perils of Marriage Equality* (NYU Press 2015), and *Repair: Redeeming the Promise of Slavery's Abolition* (Haymarket Press 2019)

Marc Van Der Hout: Ernie & Bill Goodman Award:

Marc Van Der Hout is the founder of Van Der Hout LLP, a firm recognized nationally for its litigation and advocacy on cutting-edge issues. A California State Bar Certified Specialist in Immigration and Nationality Law, Marc has been recognized by bar associations throughout the country for his innovative and resourceful representation of immigrants. He has twice received the Carol Weiss King Award of the National Immigration Project for outstanding immigration litigation and twice the American Immigration Lawyers

Association premier award for outstanding litigation in the field of immigration law. Marc was national president of the NLG in 1985-86 and is a past board chair of the National Immigration Project.

Matthew McLoughlin: Karen Jo Koonan Legal

Worker Award: Matthew McLoughlin is an activist and legal worker. Cutting his teeth as an organizer with Occupy Chicago, Matt has continued to organize around key issues in Chicago including public school closures, immigrant rights, and racial justice. For the past 14 years, he has helped lift up, document, and support local and national movements to end mass incarceration, including organizing jail support and solidarity actions. He is a co-founder of the Chicago Community Bond Fund and helped pass the Pretrial Fairness Act. He currently acts as the Campaign Coordinator for the IL Network for Pretrial Justice, serves as the Director of Operations for the Chicago chapter of the NLG, and is the Legal Worker VP for the NLG.

Samantha Santoro: C.B. King Student Award: Samantha Santoro (they/she) is from Toronto, Canada. Samantha worked in the areas of racial and disability justice before law school. During their 1L summer, Samantha split their time at Make the Road NY in their Immigration Unit and Community Justice Project Miami. Samantha wants to divert as many people as possible from the criminal legal system while working towards the abolition of all carceral and colonial logics and systems, from Turtle Island to Palestine and beyond.

Beyond Bars Submissions

3 Rules for Jailhouse Lawyers - by Samuel C Wendt, Piedmont CI, Salisbury, NC

Dear Jailhouse Lawyers,

It is well known that in 1969, *Johnson v. Avery* 393 US 483, 895 Ct. 747, 21 L. Ed 718 gave Jailhouse Lawyers protections in fighting their own post-conviction relief which created the status quo we enjoy today. Prior to *Johnson*, nearly every jurisdiction stonewalled any opportunity a prisoner might have on their own to obtain meaningful access to the courts. Some, like North Carolina, still do by placing policies, unwritten barriers, or hurdles in force prohibiting practicing.

The NC Dept. of Adult Correction (NCDAC) has a policy prohibiting Jailhouse Lawyers from practicing:

“Legal Assistance. Offenders are not permitted to assist each other with Litigation or Legal matters except for assigned Law Library clerks. Assigned Law Library clerks are not trained in the law and only provide assistance to those offenders who are unable to read and/or write. The DAC also provides, through Contractual services, Licensed Attorneys for this purpose.” - NCDAC policy & procedure Manual Chapter B-.0301

and punishes them for doing so:

“(C) the following are Class C disciplinary offenses:...
.....[C20] Assist another person with Litigation or Legal matters.”

Now the “Legal assistance” policy does not itself run afoul of *Johnson*, however in practice it clearly does. NCDAC does not actually provide contracted legal attorneys whatsoever, and the NC Prison Legal services (a non-profit legal assistance program) is not contracted by the state, and frequently refuses representation. So the only alternative for inmates is to utilize JHLs.

All of this is said to provide background for and a warning to say aspiring JHLs...KNOW THE RULES! You can, and likely will be punished for helping others with post-conviction issues, but you are far more likely to experience very real problems if you don't obey these 3 rules, related to *Johnson*:

Rule #1: Never accept money, items, or services for your work.

I have personally seen JHLs charge for services, and this is dangerous for several reasons. 1) People expect results for payment, and Law is never guaranteed in favor of the Plaintiff or Petitioner. 2) Charging for services is only allowed for professional attorneys, and many state laws prohibit non-licensed attorneys from practicing-placing criminal files and Jail time as penalties. 3) When someone pays you something in prison, sometimes they may feel like they have a right to your time and attention. While this is similar to #1, it can be very problematic especially for those who believe they are entitled to your services because they paid you. And 4) money always causes problems. If you are caught up in a payment triangle, or a multiple transaction situation that backfires, the hassle simply isn't worth it.

I get it, some people are adamant about payment because that's just the way they are, or the way they grew up. In these cases simply explain this rule and go from there. If they change to give you something as a friend, make sure you or they are not violating some other prison rule first to avoid any traps.

Beyond Bars Submissions

3 Rules for Jailhouse Lawyers (continued)

Rule #2- Never write documents for others or submit documents on another person's behalf*

What I am trying to convey is that it may be ok to write a draft or give it to a person for them to copy in their own handwriting, but it is not ok for them to submit it in your handwriting or for them to put your name on it for them as their representative. This is also acting as an attorney and is not allowed without a license. Make completely sure the person you help knows they are representing themselves and the court takes their submission as their words not yours. This creates an unspoken duty to provide them not only document help, but to explain to them what those documents mean and why they are important. You can write a wonderful motion - only to have the inmate botch the hearing. Recently, a different JHL wrote up some very good tort claims, only to have the person who paid him get aggravated and frustrated at the hearing when he was questioned by the defense. Eventually his claims were dismissed because he got confused and wrongfully admitted to contributing negligence on cross examination. So you see, it's one thing to be a JHL who writes motions - while it's quite another to actually educate people on their rights in a specific situation. That is critical to victory and is often forgotten. You can lead an inmate to a hearing, but it is their conduct and knowledge of the situation that can make or break their case.

(*The only exception to this is Habeas Corpus - "Next Friend" petitions if your jurisdiction allows it; NC doesn't allow prisoners to file HC Petitions at all)

Rule #3 - If your jurisdiction provides legal help, adequately under the law, then you cannot be a JHL (unless you have a license)

Johnson is very specific on this point:

"Unless and until the state provides some reasonable alternative to assist inmates in the preparation of post-conviction relief, it may not validly enforce a regulation..barring inmates from furnishing such assistance to other prisoners."

This translates to: If you have adequate access to Legal representation where you are - that is provided by the state, you need to use that. I totally agree with this statement because trained lawyers work outside of prison walls, have experience, and have access to tons of tools and resources prisoners don't. NCDAC claims Prison Legal Services is adequate, but to refute that I give a specific example: My conditions of confinement case against Tabor City CI. *Wendt v Ballard*, et al not only affected me but thousands of other NC inmates impacted by severe understaffing. Not only did NC PLS refuse to represent me after I passed the initial review, but they refused again when my case made it to discovery...This is hardly "adequate" assistance. I later found out that no contractual obligation exists between NCDAC and NCPLS, so I had no choice but to go it alone as a pro se JLH. If your jurisdiction provides lawyers, go with that, if not JHL it up!

These three basic rules are the main rules any JHL needs to follow to avoid serious trouble and act within the law. If you choose to follow them, that's up to you - but I can tell you that following them has resulted in much less stress for me.

Beyond Bars Submissions

In Pursuit of Rehabilitation - by E.C. Theus-Roberts, Pendleton CF, Indiana

The year 2024 held so much promise for Indiana State Reformatory (ISR). Trent Allen, formerly warden at a CA prison, had assumed the helm with specific purpose. He began his first full year of administration at ISR with a decisive break from the previous administration's philosophy. Under his predecessor, Dennis Reagle, retributivist responses and severe punitive measures were the norm. For Allen the idea was to achieve a more humanistic dynamic with new and expanded job programs, initiatives, and productive activities. An open ear was given to staff and prisoner suggestions.

Soon after a prisoner presented an initiative titled "Idleness Resolution Exchange," or I.R.E. for short. I.R.E. is modeled after several federal Bureau of Prisons Evidence-based Recidivism Reduction (EBRR) programs, a full list can be found on the Bureau's website or downloaded as a pdf file.

The objectives of I.R.E. include engaging idle prisoners, facilitating improved case management outcomes, provide staff and offenders enrichment opportunities, expand the reach of education services, and, do all this as cost-effectively as possible. I.R.E. was received enthusiastically by Allen who delegated its implementation and supervision to his deputy warden of Re-Entry, Andrew Cole. I.R.E. was scheduled for a pilot-launch on 6 January 2025. This is until it hit a roadblock.

Opposition to I.R.E. came from a most unexpected source: ISR Programs Director. Programs Director Richard Latour is one of those "entrenched" employees found in every institution. The kind who while ostensibly fulfilling their duties are actually in shrewd, upward maneuvering. Instead of encouraging, facilitating, and supporting I.R.E., which is his job, Latour set himself in opposition to it. Even commenting that "he [deputy warden Cole] wouldn't have approved it if he'd known I wasn't involved in it."

Through his relationship with former major, now deputy Warden Cole and backroom discussions, Latour provoked the indefinite postponement of I.R.E. There

is a concept expressed in the Latin *factum probans*, which means for Latour to strive so hard to sabotage I.R.E. there must be some other motive.

After investigating possible motives, this author found that Latour already had a small, limited target range program attempting some of the objectives I.R.E. revolves around. Latour's program was Shifting Thoughts, Establishing Purpose (STEP). *Factum probans*: If I.R.E., which is outside of his department and authority, is implemented it will eclipse STEP, making it obsolete. Therefore, to protect STEP, Latour felt compelled to employ subterfuge.

This kind of self-serving is not so rare within modern institutions and almost the norm inside bureaucracies. Innovations and progress are stymied by the feeble visions of small-minded egoists. For ISR, the promise of 2024 becomes the tarnished hope for 2025 with a healthy side of skepticism. While the push for I.R.E. is not abandoned, the initiative does face a steep, uphill battle. Many doubts still remain about this latest administration. Because, if entrenched employees wield influence sufficient to torpedo a warden-approved initiative aimed at improving rehabilitation outcomes, thereby making society a safer place, then is the new administration to be engaged or merely ignored?

Before Allen's administration took the reins at ISR another entrenched employee commented: "New administrators come and go all the time. I've been here for nearly 20 years."

But to quote I.R.E.'s creator - "Let us not fail to see the forest for staring at the trees; these trees being superficial similarities...STEP is concerned with helping offenders get out of trouble. I.R.E. is concerned with their rehabilitation and future reintegration."

Were punishment the sole reason for incarceration, then self-serving, entrenched employees would be a boon to the Penal Institution. In pursuit of rehabilitation, such persons are the catalyst for all manner of societal harm.

Beyond Bars Submissions

MDOC Body-Worn Cameras - by Frank Richard, Carson City CF, MI

NLG Members,

I would like to share my experiences with the new Body-Worn cameras that Michigan Dept. of Correction staff members must now wear. The BWC footage may only be accessed by submitting a MDOC form CSJ-881 Request for Body-Worn Camera Footage. The administration at my facility has a little wrinkle for doing so. They have been issuing Class Z Misconducts, Interference with the Administration of Rules. In all cases, the maximum of thirty (30) days of Loss of Privileges is being imposed.

As a "jailhouse lawyer", I have contested three (3) of these with the prison grievance system. Two of the Grievants wrote their own CSJ-881 requests. They never received a copy.

The third inmate who also filed a CSJ-881 request, had me write it for him. I used carbon paper to retain a copy and made the notation cc: file in the request. It was also stated that his intention to proceed with a Step 1 grievance was the purpose of this request. Vi-

olations of Use of Force and Contact, MDOC Rules 6 and 28. The inmate was then subjected to a retaliatory transfer the next day. I filed a Step 1 for this violation of his First Amendment Rights as well. (Retaliation for Speech for the redress of grievances.)

I am positive that this happens at other MDOC facilities and will continue to until someone puts their foot down. MDOC Director Heidi Washington can maintain her usual "Hear no evil, see no evil..." position. This is because Class 2 Misconducts never get to HQ in Lansing, MI. They only go as high as the Deputy Warden on appeal. \$11.2 million well spent, right?

Another issue that I wish to address, is the conduct of some of my fellow NLG "jailhouse lawyer" members. Pro Bono means just that. Charging fellow inmates for legal services, when you do not have a P number is most offensive. You are NOT LAWYERS!, stop passing yourselves off as one. This type of behavior sullies the rest of our good names. Charging for clerical services is not the same thing as writing and filing a brief or motion. Learn the difference.

Interstate Compact Contract - by Monroe Washington, Northeast NM CF, Clayton, NM

I, Monroe Bernard Washington, take pride in the fact that I've worked hard to become a great defender of the rights of others that can't, or simply aren't able to help themselves, for whatever the reason may be. Being an "ICC" inmate, Interstate Compact Contract "which was and is designated to kill-murder inmates." After assaulting an officer in 2004 August, I was sentenced to 4 ½ years in "ACU" Administrative Control Unit. No human contact, shower in your cell, bright lights on 22 hrs a day.

In an effort to cause me to lose my mind, but the Blacks law dictionary, the Bible, a regular Webster dictionary, and a prison-Jailhouse lawyer handbook kept me sane, for the most part. Without a transition period, my state of Minnesota placed me in a 250 man cell block, that shocked my senses.

Then I found out the hard way, during Covid, that being a well versed legal mind is more dangerous to all administrations, then sending officers out on stretchers. I've been shipped too to two states, before landing here in New Mexico, all for the sole purpose of being murdered, which I've escaped a total of four times thanks to my faith, spiritual life-style, and yes my ability to defend myself.

Just for the record, please see my case Monroe Bernard Washington v. Randy Adkins, CO II et al. case no. SAG24-1097. In the US district court of Maryland. The Judge has just appointed me counsel, denying the dismissal motion of defense.

Beyond Bars Submissions

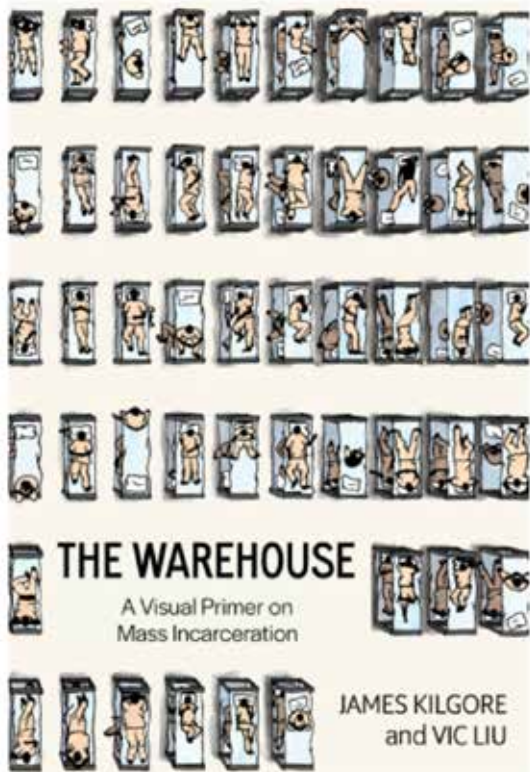
Interstate Compact Contract - continued

There's nothing worse than corruption, when those that have taken an oath to protect, are the individuals who's causing inmates to be killed, making bets and even placing contracts on other officers. So yes, even with the constant threat of death due to my legal battles against all forms of corruption I'm proud to say I still fight the good fight, by not just helping others but showing and teaching them, without pay, what they must hold to be taken seriously.

Even with attempts on my life, it took me writing to the Cumberland, MD attorney, with questions of why, with so many deaths, his office isn't investigating? I was on a plane back to MN. 48 hrs later, only to be on another plan 48 hrs after that.

With 3 years left before I'm due to be released, the only reason I'm away from my family and loved ones is because of my legal ability to hold them accountable for their misdeeds. Many of my fellow convicts have been murdered, that was in other states, under ICC and no one is investigating any of those deaths. So please my fellow Jailhouse lawyers, at whatever stage you're at in your learning, be mindful, that the wrong enemy may just cause you your life.

Book Review: The Warehouse: A Visual Primer on Mass Incarceration



(PM Press, 2024) by James Kilgore and Vic Liu
Reviewed by Christopher Santiago, Columbia, SC

In *The Warehouse*, James Kilgore and Vic Liu have created what is, in my opinion, the best introduction to mass incarceration available. Their concise, readable, and well researched primer breaks this complex subject into short, easily digestible explanations accompanied by color photos and artwork. It begins by tracing how and why the United States built the largest system of incarceration in history, examining the economic, philosophical, and political factors at play from the Nixon to Trump presidencies. Next, it gives a behind-the-walls tour, focusing on the various facets of incarcerated life from jail and sentencing to the collateral consequences people face after release. On page after page, shocking statistics and startling images help readers visualize what is deliberately hidden from the public eye: the warehousing of millions of people. The book also sheds light on the movement against incarceration, comparing the paths of reform and abolition. It is an excellent guide for educators, organizers, and anyone interested in learning about America's criminal punishment system.

Outside Subscriptions for Incarcerated Members

News Inside is a free, award winning publication which is a compilation of criminal justice news from the Marshall Project (a nonpartisan, nonprofit news organization that seeks to create and sustain a sense of national urgency about the U.S. criminal justice system). It is produced by Marshall Project editors and writers along with incarcerated contributors.

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Attn: News Inside

The Marshall Project

156 West 56th Street, 3rd Floor

New York, NY 10019

The Abolitionist is a bilingual (English/Spanish) publication dedicated to the strategy and struggle of abolition which was launched in 2004 by Critical Resistance, a national organization which seeks to build an international movement to end the prison industrial complex by challenging the belief that caging and controlling people makes us safe. It is free to prisoners and is supported by paid subscribers on the outside.

Two times per year, Critical Resistance prints different issues of *The Abolitionist*, exploring a range of topics. From analyses of racial capitalism and imperialism, to housing, education, land struggles, mental health, confronting gender violence, fights to build life-affirming infrastructure for community self-determination and more, each issue is packed with fresh analytical articles, reflections, poetry, visual art, and organizing resources and tools for resistance inside and outside of prisons

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Critical Resistance

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PO Box 22780

Oakland, CA 94609

Prison Policy Initiative Reprint

Following the Money of Mass Incarceration 2026

The Prison Policy Initiative (P.O. Box 127, Northampton, MA 01061) is a national organization that produces cutting edge research to expose the harms of mass incarceration. They send in a quarterly newsletter containing all of their publications and will mail incarcerated people any titles they would like to read. They welcome requests for national or state-level data on a range of issues related to mass incarceration including (but not limited to) probation/parole, prison/jail population data and more.

By Jacob Kang-Brown and Peter Wagner, February 11, 2026

The costs of funding the police — especially the bloated budgets of militarized federal agencies in the Department of Homeland Security — have become a recurring theme in discussions about criminal legal system policy. At the same time, crime has declined and fewer people are incarcerated, yet spending on the criminal legal system has still increased faster than inflation. All parts of the system, from local jails to fines and fees and prison industries, deserve a clear accounting and a hard look. Understanding more clearly who benefits and who pays can help re-orient budgets away from punishment and exclusion and toward public health and safety. In an update to our 2017 report, we find that the broad system of mass incarceration costs the government and families of system-involved people at least \$445 billion every year.

In this report:

- We provide the most significant costs of the nation’s globally-unprecedented system of mass incarceration and criminalization,
- We show the relative scale of the various parts of that system,
- We explain how funding for policing has rapidly increased, including the recent influx of federal dollars to immigration enforcement,
- We highlight some of the costly yet often overlooked parts of the system, and then
- We share all of our sources so that journalists and advocates can build upon our work.

The expenses covered in this report do not include a full accounting of the current, ongoing economic harms of mass incarceration. For example, we do not include recent estimates of income lost when people get sent to jail or prison (\$111 billion per year) or income lost by children of incarcerated parents during their working years (\$215 billion per year). For that reason, our estimate — as massive as it is — should be viewed as a limited one.

Our goal with this report is to give the “big picture” view of the economic incentives that help shape the criminal legal system, by identifying some of the key stakeholders and quantifying their “stake” in the status quo. Our data visualization shows how wide and how deep mass incarceration and criminalization have spread into the U.S. economy. We find:

- Policing is a massive public expense and its spending has grown faster than other parts of the system in recent years.
- Federal expenditures related to policing and the Trump administration’s mass deportation agenda now make up 25% of all government spending on the criminal legal system.
- Almost half of the money spent on running the correctional system goes to paying staff. These employees form an influential lobby that sometimes blocks reform and whose jobs are often protected even when prison populations drop.

Prison Policy Initiative Reprint

Following the Money of Mass Incarceration 2026, continued

- The criminal legal system is overwhelmingly a public system, with private prison companies acting only as extensions of the public system. The government payroll for corrections employees is over 100 times higher than the private prison industry's profits.
- Individuals who come into contact with the system — and their loved ones — pay over \$27.7 billion a year in fines and fees, bail premiums, commissary payments, and telecommunications costs. This is over five times the amount that goes to private prisons and detention centers.
- Despite the fact that the Constitution requires counsel to be appointed for defendants unable to afford legal representation, the government spends only \$7.9 billion on this right.
- * Feeding and providing health care for nearly 2 million people, even as inadequately as they do behind bars, is expensive at \$18 billion per year.

What's changed since 2017

Public funding for the criminal legal system has increased in recent years, even as the number of people involved in the system has declined, reflecting changes in priorities as well as economic factors like inflation. The largest total increase has been funding for policing, but the most rapid funding increase came in 2025 for ICE, Border Patrol and other agencies involved in the criminalization of immigration and immigration detention.

Spending on policing rose by \$58.3 billion (a 40% increase) between 2017 and 2025. Expanded federal budgets account for about one-third of that increase (\$19.3 billion), while state and local policing budgets grew by \$38.5 billion. In contrast to the steep funding increase for police agencies, spending on public libraries grew only 22% in this same time period, from \$12.7 to \$15.4 billion, not even keeping pace with inflation (which was 31.5% between 2017 and 2025).

Corrections spending, a category that includes local jail, prison, probation, and parole systems, shot up \$24.8 billion (a 27% increase) between 2017 and 2025, even as correctional populations shrank by over 1 million people (15%). Even as prison and jail populations have dropped, correctional payrolls continue to swell; agencies rely on overtime to meet staffing requirements and offer increasingly generous pay in vain attempts to relieve chronic understaffing.

Judicial and legal expenses connected to criminal law enforcement, such as spending on prosecution and defense, grew by \$10.7 billion (a 32% increase). While still under-funded compared to prosecution, increased funding for indigent defense has narrowed the gap in some states.

Finally, federal immigration- and border-related policing and immigration detention totaled \$54.3 billion in 2025, up from \$20 billion in 2017, making this the fastest-growing public expense in the sector. The 2025 budget, 2.7 times larger than in 2017, now makes up 13% of all government spending on the criminal legal system.

Conclusions

This report and infographic are a step toward better understanding who benefits from mass incarceration and why some stakeholders might be more resistant to reform. We have no doubt that we missed some costs, and we did not include some costs because they are currently unknowable or are relatively small in the big picture. But,

Prison Policy Initiative Reprint

Following the Money of Mass Incarceration 2026, continued

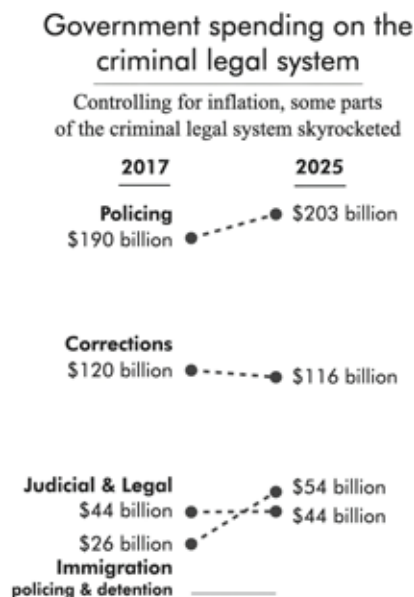
by following the money, one can see that private prison corporations aren't the only ones who benefit from mass incarceration. By far, the public agencies and public employees are the key beneficiaries. Some of the lesser-known major players in the system of mass incarceration and criminalization include:

- Bail bond companies that collect \$1.65 billion in nonrefundable fees from defendants and their families. The industry also actively works to block or rollback reforms that threaten its profits, even though reforms have been shown to reduce wealth-based pretrial detention while maintaining public safety.
- Commissary vendors and specialized telecommunications companies that sell goods, tablets, and phone calls to incarcerated people — who rely largely on money sent by loved ones — is an even larger industry that brings in \$5.6 billion a year.
- Correctional health care providers that provide, at great cost, inadequate staffing, medicine, and care to people behind bars.

A graphic like this shows the relative economic cost of different parts of mass incarceration, but it can also obscure the fact that we don't have a single monolithic "system." Instead, we have 50 state systems, thousands of local government systems, and a federal system. The federal system includes both criminal law enforcement

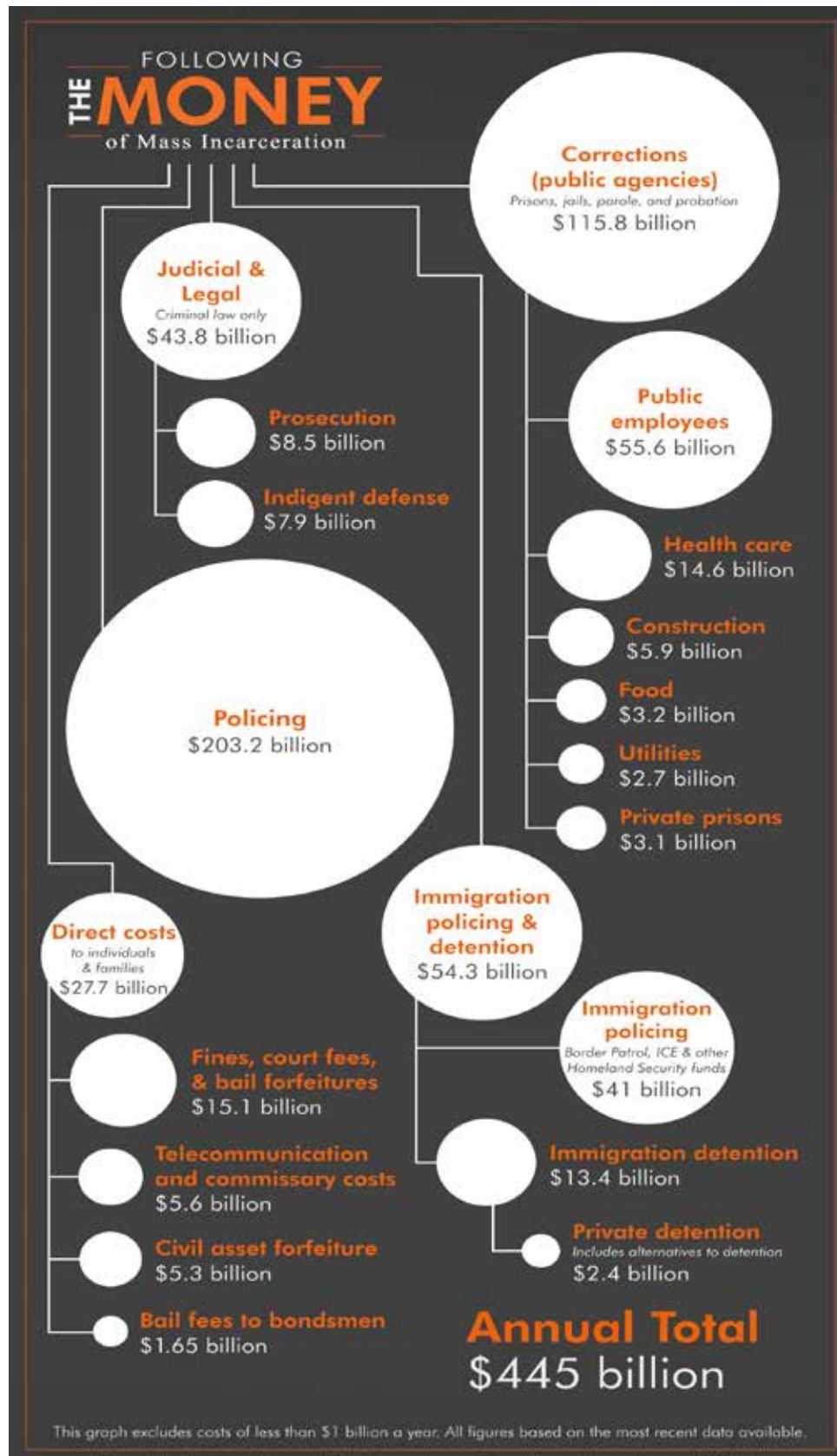
and a bloated federal immigration system oriented towards criminalization and detention. Sometimes these local, state, and federal systems work together, but often they do not, and looking at one "national" picture can obscure the importance of state and local policy decisions. For example, while state government spending makes up the majority (57%) of corrections costs, local governments make up close to a third (31%). Local governments are largely enforcing state law, and local discretionary arrest and bail policies can have tremendous influence on both the state budget and legal system outcomes. For example, most of the cost of running local jails is spent detaining people who have not been convicted. Similarly, in some places, fines and fees are a major source of local revenue and thus incentivize both criminalization and unfair taxation. In turn, these fines and fees contribute to mass incarceration.

This report serves as a starting point for those ready to look at these systems anew, given the astronomical economic, social, and human costs of mass incarceration. To be sure, there are ideological as well as economic reasons for mass incarceration and criminalization. But at this moment, when crime is near record lows and federal policymakers seek to criminalize large numbers of people, we need a far more expansive view of how our criminal legal system works, whom it hurts, and whom it really serves.



Prison Policy Initiative Reprint

Following the Money of Mass Incarceration 2026, continued



2026 Voting

Every year, our members propose resolutions/amendments for the membership to vote on. The following pages are the proposed resolutions/amendments for this year. For our Jailhouse Lawyer members, you may tear out this voting form, complete it, and mail to:

Attn: Voting
National Lawyers Guild
PO Box 1266
New York, NY 10009

1. Resolution on U.S. Violations of International Law in the Western Hemisphere

Yes____ No____ Abstain____

2. Amendment to Bylaw 8.12

Yes____ No____ Abstain____

2026 Voting

Resolution on U.S. Violations of International Law in the Western Hemisphere

WHEREAS: The US National Security Strategy released by the Executive in 2025 is a statement of intention to promote lawlessness. It declares that the US must be “preeminent in the Western hemisphere as a condition of our security and prosperity.”

WHEREAS: The kidnapping of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, by U.S. military forces violates the US War Powers Act; Article 2(2) of the United Nations Charter; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Geneva Conventions, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and the United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials as well as customary international law.

WHEREAS: The US is in violation of its duties under the UN and OAS Charters, which are owed not only to Venezuela but erga omnes, to all others. The US breach of duties damages Venezuela specifically, interfering with its right to self-determination, its right to be treated as an equal state, its national sovereignty and its territorial integrity. US violations affect the entire international legal system, undermining respect for the US, causing fear and chaos, and spawning disinclination to rely on law. US violations invite other states to use threats and force, rather than to rely on international law, including recourse to international courts and other judicial bodies. US violations are contrary to building cooperation to advance human rights, as required by UN Charter Art. 56.

WHEREAS: The US has attacked civilian and commercial vessels with weapons and drones, boarded vessels, destroyed boats, kidnapped crew members of ships and killed crew members of smaller boats on the High Seas. The US has interfered with the ability of nationals of Venezuela and its neighboring states, such as Colombia, to engage in fishing, their livelihood. The US has violated the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Art. 88, which reserves the High Seas (international waters) for peaceful purposes and Art. 89, which prohibits any state from subjecting part

of the High Seas to its sovereignty, which the US has accomplished through a massive occupation of ocean space by its naval and Coast Guard vessels. The US has stolen marine vessels flagged in several states. Marine vessels and their cargo (oil) which have approached or transited Venezuelan waters have been seized and the US President has stated those will be retained by the US, in violation of maritime law.

WHEREAS: The stationing of 10 naval vessels and deployment of 10,000 troops in the region is ominous. The stationing of half this force in Puerto Rico, including F-35 fighter jets, drones and surveillance planes, and the reopening of the Roosevelt Roads base is contrary to decolonization of Puerto Rico and the imperative to close US bases to demilitarize.

WHEREAS: The US government continues to blockade Cuba, preventing all oil shipments to the island in an attempt to bring about economic collapse and political change.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED: that the NLG calls upon the US Congress to hold hearings to investigate these war crimes, to consider articles of impeachment against President Trump and Defense Secretary Hegseth, and to enact such additional legislation as may be needed to ensure that such actions will not be repeated.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the NLG calls for refusal by military and civilian workers, and their unions, to service, fuel, load, or unload US warships and warplanes.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NLG calls for legal and political support of U.S. service-members who refuse unlawful orders to carry out these imperial policies or otherwise protest them.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the NLG, through its Military Law Task Force, will develop educational materials, including webinars, articles, legal memos, and other materials on these issues for use by the NLG membership and the public.

2026 Voting

Proposed 2026 Amendment to Bylaws Section 8.12

WHEREAS the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) has members who are lawyers, legal workers, and Jailhouse Lawyers (JHL), and

WHEREAS the National Convention is the highest decision making body of the NLG, and

WHEREAS all members have the right to vote on resolutions, amendments, and elections put forth at the National Convention, and

WHEREAS due to their incarceration, JHLs must vote via paper ballot on such resolutions, amendments, and elections, and

WHEREAS the current election timelines laid out in the NLG Bylaws make it impossible for JHLs to be sent ballots that include all candidates for office with the NLG and emergency resolutions proposed at the convention, and to return them before the stated deadline and

WHEREAS the current system effectively disenfranchises JHLs in these cases, now

BE IT RESOLVED that section 8.12 of the NLG Bylaws, governing the timelines used for voting for the National Convention be amended as follows:

Current language:

Section 8.12 Vote Timing- The RC will inform NO staff what matters need to be voted on. NO staff will make voting for officers, amendments, and resolutions available online 10 days after the 2nd plenary. NO staff will mail ballots to jailhouse lawyers and other requesting members within 10 days of the 2nd plenary. Voting is open for 31 days. Ballots cast by mail must be returned to the NO by Mail postmarked not later than the 31st day after the date the ballots were mailed to the membership or when electronically posted to email or on the NLG website. The ballot shall prominently specify the date by which it must be postmarked, returned or replied to the NO to be counted. The NO shall announce the number of votes for and against each proposal and candidate within 45 days on the website and on listserves.

Proposed Amendment:

Section 8.12 Vote Timing- The RC will inform NO staff what matters need to be voted on. NO staff will make voting for officers, amendments, and resolutions available online 10 days after the 2nd plenary. NO staff will mail ballots to jailhouse lawyers and other requesting members within 10 14 days of the 2nd plenary. Voting is open for 31 45 days. Ballots cast by mail must be returned to the NO by Mail postmarked not later than the 31st 45th day after the date the ballots were mailed to the membership or when electronically posted to email or on the NLG website. The ballot shall prominently specify the date by which it must be postmarked, returned or replied to the NO to be counted. The NO shall announce the number of votes for and against each proposal and candidate within 45 60 days on the website and on listserves.

National Lawyers Guild Foundation
PO Box 1266
New York, NY 10009

