

Report on EJI Activity

2023





Sunrise over the Alabama River.

Thank You


On behalf of our clients, the people we serve, and our staff, I want to thank you for the support you've provided to EJI over the last year. At a time when there are so many threats to human rights, social justice, and a commitment to basic dignity for every person, our work is more vital than ever. The atmosphere of fear and anger that has emerged in our political spaces, along with the retreat from basic rights in some of our judicial spaces, means that we must fight harder than ever to advance justice in this country.

I'm extremely proud that, with your support, we have been able to expand our work to help people suffering from extreme poverty and food insecurity, as well as assist people struggling with disease and illness—many of whom have nowhere else to go. The outstanding medical team at our new Health Clinic is making a meaningful difference in the lives of people coming out of jails and prisons as well as people dealing with untreated health problems. Providing direct services to people and families in need has been urgent, and the impact we have witnessed has been extremely moving.

We are thrilled that hundreds of thousands of people have come to our sites in the last year and we're excited to open a new site in early 2024. Narrative work and the effort to help everyone understand the need for truth and justice remains a top priority at EJI. We are energized to see the impact this work is having on thousands of people.

We remain fully committed to ending mass incarceration and assisting people who have been wrongly convicted, unfairly sentenced, or unjustly prosecuted in our legal system. EJI staff work in prisons each week responding to horrific conditions of confinement that motivate us to keep challenging abuse and mistreatment. The struggle continues.

With your support we will continue our work, knowing that we are not alone in our efforts. We hope this brief report affirms the support you've provided us as we move into a new year. Thank you again for standing with us.

WITH HOPE


Bryan Stevenson, Executive Director

Advancing Racial Justice Through Art



"Strike," by Hank Willis Thomas, at Freedom Monument Sculpture Park. *Bryan G. Stevenson*



Human Pictures

Freedom Monument Sculpture Park

This year EJI announced the 2024 opening of Freedom Monument Sculpture Park, which will offer an immersive, multifaceted examination of America's history with a focus on slavery and its legacy.

The sculpture park will present narrative, historical artifacts, large-scale sculptures, contemporary art commissions, and the National Monument to Freedom, which honors all four million enslaved Black people who were emancipated at the end of the Civil War by memorializing more than 120,000 unique

surnames documented at the time.

The monument will celebrate the courageous survivors of this horrific era by recognizing the families they created and millions of their descendants, many of whom still carry the names chosen by their formerly enslaved foreparents.

Newly commissioned works by artists including Alison Saar, Charles Gaines, Nikesha Breeze, Vinnie Bagwell, and Kwame Akoto-Bamfo will be featured at the sculpture park alongside major sculptures from

Wangechi Mutu, Rose B. Simpson, Theaster Gates, Kehinde Wiley, and many others.

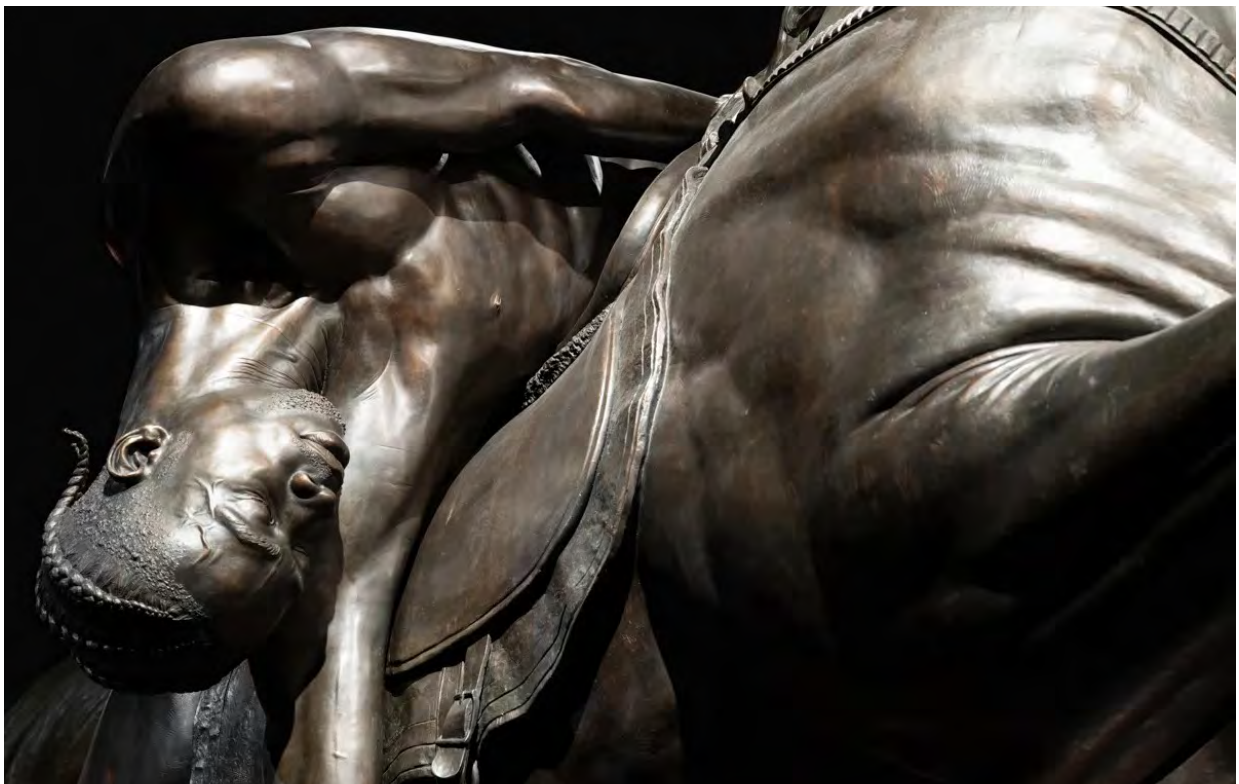
“Slavery reshaped life on continents across the world—from the Americas to Africa and Europe,” said EJI Director Bryan Stevenson.



“We invite everyone to visit Freedom Monument Sculpture Park for a profound experience that will illuminate challenging aspects of our past while inspiring a more hopeful future shaped by truth and justice.”

Freedom Monument Sculpture Park will join EJI’s award-winning Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice to form the Legacy Sites, designed to be experienced as one journey.

The Legacy Sites now include meeting and convening spaces where groups can discuss and process their experiences. The Legacy Annex, Legacy Hall, Legacy Room, and Peace and Justice Memorial Center host meetings and conversations for hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.



An Archeology of Silence, by Kehinde Wiley. Courtesy of the artist and Templon, Paris, Brussels, and New York

Critical Acclaim for the Legacy Sites



“An unflinching and moving journey through the story of slavery.”

— The New York Times



“The Legacy Museum deftly uses technology, via holograms and videos, to ‘listen’ to the enslaved and incarcerated.”

— Essence



“One of the most impressive exhibits—and one of the most significant memorials—to be found anywhere on the planet.”

— Architect Magazine



“EJI has created a place where art is a portal through which visitors can see, contemplate and begin to understand the history of Black trauma in the United States.”

— Miami Herald



Eric J. Shelton/Mississippi Today/Report For America

Addressing Widespread Poverty

Hunger Relief

A 2023 report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture showed that 17 million American households struggled to get enough food last year. In Alabama, 17% of adults and 23% of children currently experience food insecurity. To help address food insecurity, EJI continued to expand its hunger relief program, which provides families in need with financial assistance for groceries and essential items like cleaning supplies and diapers.

In the year since EJI launched the subsidy program, staff have traveled across Alabama to provide direct and immediate aid to hundreds of families, many of whom include

small children, elderly people, and people directly impacted by incarceration.

To date, EJI has provided direct financial assistance to over 2,000 families in 54 counties across Alabama.

We look forward to reaching more families in the new year and hope that our program can help inspire new ways of addressing food insecurity in the U.S.



Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

Health Care



Alander Rocha/Alabama Reflector

With hundreds of thousands of uninsured people in Alabama, access to health care remains a critical problem. People in Alabama die of chronic diseases that patients in other states survive. The mortality rate inside Alabama’s prisons is one of the highest in the country. People coming out of jails and prisons suffer from undiagnosed illnesses that can seriously compromise their health and successful re-entry.

To help support Alabama’s most vulnerable people, in June we

opened EJI Health, a new health clinic in Montgomery that offers free screenings and care for a range of diseases and illnesses.

“We have a setting where we have time to really address patients’ needs and listen and give them the dignity and respect that we all deserve,” said Dr. Margaret Hayden, a full-time primary care physician at EJI Health.

In just a few months, EJI Health has documented extremely high rates of



Dr. Sanjay Kishore, Dr. Margaret Hayden, and Health Manager Meghan Hunter, members of EJI's health team. *Matthew Odom/EJI*

Hepatitis C among people who have been recently incarcerated and provided treatment to over two dozen people who have since been cured. We've served hundreds of people with chronic illnesses and will touch even more patients in 2024.

EJI Health also includes a mobile clinic that travels to underserved areas across the state to provide free vaccinations, health screenings, and support to those in need.



Facilitating Public Education and Engagement



Working With Young People: Legacy Scholars



Students from the Career Development Center in Jackson, Mississippi at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice.

Since the spring of 2022, EJI has subsidized and organized trips to the Legacy Sites for thousands of high school students. This year, EJI approved grants to bring 2,328 students from nine states—Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Tennessee, New York, Delaware, Florida, New Jersey, and North Carolina—to our sites in Montgomery.

Our 2023 grantees came from schools that on average were 78% Black, with 72% of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch. Most of the schools that participated in the program could not afford to travel to the sites without assistance. For many students in the program, the trip was the first time they had traveled



Students from Camden Prep in Camden, New Jersey, at the Legacy Museum.

outside their state or zip code.

In May, EJI announced the first 19 recipients of our Montgomery Legacy Scholarship, which grew out of a new collaboration with Montgomery Public Schools.

The scholarship is awarded to students who have overcome obstacles and demonstrated a commitment to their communities. Graduating seniors from nine Montgomery public high schools received \$10,000 each. "Our goal is to provide equity, access, and opportunity to all our students, and EJI is helping us achieve that

objective," said Montgomery Superintendent Dr. Melvin J. Brown.

"Our partnership with EJI has already proved to be invaluable, and the Legacy Scholars initiative will have a huge impact on the lives of some very deserving students."

Montgomery Public School Legacy Scholarship Winners



The 19 recipients of the 2023 Legacy Scholarship are Marti Baine, Paris Banks, Samantha Buhanan, Darryl Dees, Ken'Tavis Delbridge, Elizabeth Diaz, Shalaiah Lee, Joshua Maye, Molly Mitchell, Mekaiyah Portis, Eris Robinson, Jamerio Robinson, Alberta Shuford, Andrea Smith, Bradyn Stallworth, Landon Townsend, Tiana Vanburen, Shakela Walton, and Alniajai Whatley. *Bryan G. Stevenson*

Community Remembrance Project



A historical marker erected in Dallas, Texas, honors William Allen Taylor, a 25-year-old Black man who was killed by a white mob in 1884. WFAA

Since 2015, EJI's Community Remembrance Project has supported local communities across the country to install more than 80 historical markers, collect soil from approximately 700 locations where racial terror lynchings took place, and judge Racial Justice Essay entries for over 900 high school students.

This year EJI continued to work with coalitions across the country to help communities uncover the truth of our nation's history of injustice, recognize the experiences of Black communities across generations, and expose how the history of racial injustice continues to impact communities today.



Community members unveil a historical marker memorializing William Allen Taylor in Dallas, Texas. *WFAA*



Community members collect soil from the grounds of Pine Grove AME Church, near where their ancestor Eliza Goode was fatally shot in 1898. *Damian Dominguez/Index-Journal*



Jars with soil collected to honor victims of racial terror violence in Phoenix, South Carolina. *EJI*



Unveiling of a historical marker honoring multiple victims lynched in Anderson, South Carolina, between 1894-1911. *Ken Ruinard/Independent Mail*



Community members dedicate a historical marker in Leavenworth, Kansas.



Community members gather in front of a new marker honoring Lloyd Warner, an 18-year-old Black teenager killed by a white mob in St. Joseph, Missouri. *EJI*

Criminal Justice Education

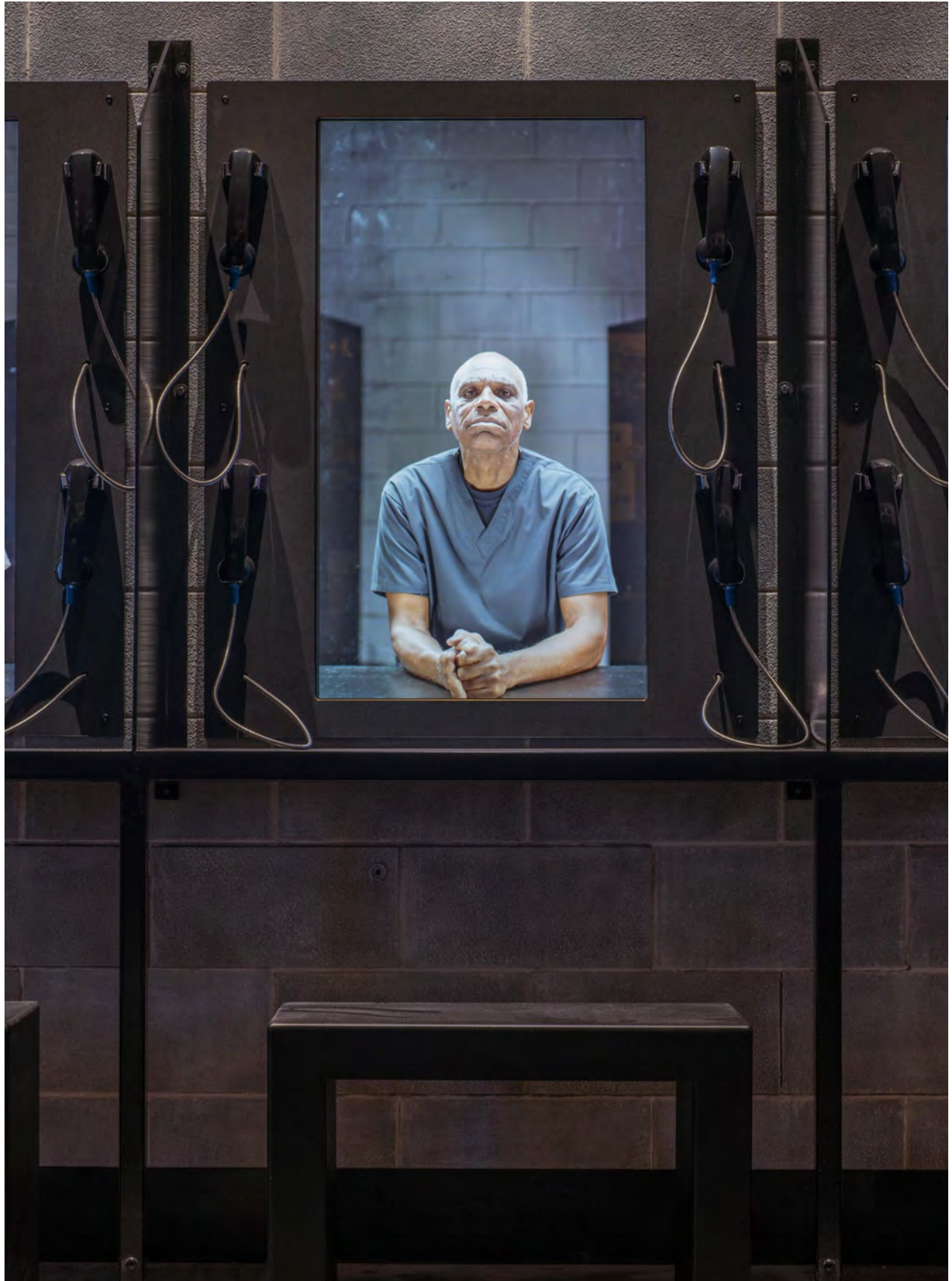


EJI Senior Attorneys Charlotte Morrison, Angie Setzer, and Sia Sanneh. *ShyCooley Photography*

This year, EJI staff continued to advance the discussion on criminal justice in America, presenting our work to hundreds of organizations, communities, and decision makers in the U.S. and abroad.

As we continue to call for the abolition of the death penalty, we also educated legislators and

policymakers across the country about America's flawed, unreliable, and arbitrary system of capital punishment.



EJI former client Robert Caston speaks to visitors in an exhibit at EJI's legacy museum. *Human Pictures*

Racial Justice Education



We launched a new series of long-form investigative articles and accompanying short films in 2023. “The Kiss” tells the story of the brutal treatment of two young Black boys and the terror their community faced after a white girl kissed them on the cheek. Our second feature, “The Wilmington Massacre of 1898,” documents an unprecedented coup that drastically changed the racial demographics of a North Carolina city.

The special feature series builds on

EJI’s award-winning *A History of Racial Injustice* calendar, which features daily historical events. Our 2024 calendar—the 12th edition of our *A History of Racial Injustice* wall calendar—is available for purchase and has already been distributed to thousands of people.

EJI gathered hundreds of people for convenings at the Legacy Sites to facilitate deeper learning and conversations in 2023.

In May, acclaimed clarinetist



Anthony McGill and EJI Director Bryan Stevenson welcome guests during a convening in Montgomery in May 2023. *Bryan G. Stevenson*

Anthony McGill, the first African American to be selected as principal clarinet of the New York Philharmonic, worked with EJI to organize a convening in Montgomery for classical musicians after his own deeply moving visit to our museum and memorial.

Guests spent a day at EJI's Legacy Sites before participating in energetic discussions about incorporating truthful historical narratives into performing, studying, and presenting classical music

today. World-renowned musicians and leading executives, educators, and administrators also explored how to create spaces and opportunities that encourage diverse communities of young musicians to engage and connect with this history.

Advocating on Behalf of the Most Vulnerable



William Widmer/Redux



Boston Globe

Prison Conditions

EJI continues to challenge unconstitutional conditions in Alabama's prisons, which are plagued by abuse, violence, and misconduct.

At least 99 people have been killed in Alabama's prisons since federal prosecutors launched an investigation into the state's prisons in October 2016.

Hundreds more have died from preventable causes, such as suicides and drug overdoses.

In May, an Alabama corrections officer described rampant corruption among officers and supervisors, unchecked abuse and neglect of the people in their care, and dangerous, disgusting conditions that fuel high turnover among prison staff.

Rather than implementing solutions to address the violence and misconduct, Alabama has committed to building two new prisons at a projected cost of \$1.3 billion.



Ben Gray/Atlanta Journal-Constitution/AP

Death Penalty

EJI currently represents dozens of people on death row. Since our founding we have won relief, reduced sentences, or freedom for scores of people who were wrongly convicted or sentenced to death.

EJI remains committed to ending the use of the death penalty—a flawed and expensive policy defined by bias and error.

Throughout the year, EJI attorneys argued in state and federal courts on behalf of people who have been sentenced to death.

In January, the Alabama Supreme Court announced a new rule change that abdicated its authority over the scheduling of executions and granted the governor unrestricted discretion over when executions are carried out in the state. Alabama is now the only state in the country that allows executions without an established time frame, giving state executioners unprecedented power.

The rule change followed a series of “failed execution attempts” and allegations of torture and inhumane treatment of condemned prisoners. Alabama’s prolonged and problematic execution of Joe James and its botched attempts to execute Alan



Ben Margot/AP

Miller and Kenneth Smith attracted national and international attention that prompted Governor Kay Ivey to halt executions temporarily. Although the governor called for a “top-to-bottom” review, there was no independent investigation and Alabama prison staff were allowed to resume executions without ever identifying what went wrong in their last three scheduled executions.

Our work on behalf of condemned people in Alabama remained vital this year as the State resumed executions despite major concerns surrounding Alabama’s protocols and procedures. And in November, the Alabama Supreme Court

authorized the use of an untested, unproven, never-before-used execution method when it gave prison staff a second chance to attempt to kill Kenny Smith by forcing him to breathe nitrogen gas.

As one of only five states that executed people this year—and one of only seven states that sentenced people to death—Alabama remains an outlier in its continued use of the death penalty.



Dozens of people from across the country who were condemned to die in prison when they were children gather in Montgomery after winning their release and committing to help others still incarcerated. *Jody Kent Lavy*

Children in Adult Prisons

EJI continues to represent people in multiple states who received unfair or extreme sentences for crimes that occurred when they were children. This year we won the release of more than a dozen clients who had been condemned to die in prison.

Since EJI started working on behalf of children sentenced to die in prison, 28 states have banned life-without-parole sentences for juveniles. This year, Illinois, New Mexico, and Minnesota abolished

juvenile life-without-parole sentences.

We continue to advocate for children who have been prosecuted as adults and provide formerly incarcerated people with job training, education, housing, and other critical re-entry support.



Richard Ross/Juvenile-In-Justice



ShyCooley Photography

Recognition for EJI's Work



Samuel Stuart Hollenshead/NYU Photo Bureau

In March, President Joe Biden awarded EJI Director Bryan Stevenson the National Humanities Medal, which honors “individuals or groups whose work has deepened the nation’s understanding of the humanities and broadened our citizens’ engagement with history, literature, languages, philosophy, and other humanities subjects.”

EJI Community Educator Anthony Ray Hinton was awarded an honorary doctorate degree by Emory University in May and delivered the university’s keynote address. Mr. Hinton spent 30 years on Alabama’s death row for a crime he did not commit before EJI won his release in 2015.

Charlotte Morrison, a senior attorney at EJI, was named the Montgomery

Advertiser’s Community Hero in May for over two decades of contributions to improving Alabama’s criminal justice system and the Montgomery community.

EJI continues to receive a perfect score of 100 and four out of four stars from Charity Navigator.

We are grateful to each of you for supporting our work in 2023. We are committed to continuing the fight for justice—and with your help, we will keep working to end mass incarceration, excessive punishment, and racial injustice.



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