



DISMANTLING IMMIGRATION DETENTION AND ENFORCEMENT, DISRUPTING THE ARREST-TO-DEPORTATION PIPELINE AND FIGHTING DISPARITIES IN THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM

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The Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC) builds a democratic society that values diversity and the rights of all people. Through the ILRC's policy and advocacy efforts, we promote a vision of racial justice that advances the rights of all immigrants, including those who have had contact with the criminal legal system.

The ILRC is dedicated to the long-term goal of dismantling systems undergirded in racial inequities and investing in the power of local communities to organize and create solutions. To achieve our goals, we focus on disrupting the arrest to deportation pipeline that has led to expansive over-policing and immigration enforcement and has contributed to the mass incarceration and exile of Black people and people of color in the United States.

This work is carried out through policy advocacy and implementation at the local, state, and federal level; cultural change work that amplifies a counternarrative to mass criminalization; deep coalition building efforts and collaborative work particularly with directly impacted individuals; and capacity building efforts that equip system stakeholders and impacted communities with the tools to create change that works towards a shared vision of justice for all people.

Fight to Abolish Immigration Detention in California.

As the most immigrant-rich state in the nation, California confronts both detention and deportation on a massive scale. Seven immigration detention facilities operate in California, all of which are run by private prison companies. In response, the ILRC co-founded and continues to manage the California coalition, a community-based partnership of visionary organizations across California formed to harness collective statewide power to abolish immigrant detention and reimagine a better future.

Alongside our partners, we passed a series of groundbreaking state reforms including, and AB32 (prohibiting private incarceration). The DND coalition is a vehicle for invaluable statewide strategy, coordination, and power building, and has served as a force multiplier for our collective vision to abolish detention. Without DND's coordination, communications efforts, strategy, and capacity-building, DND members would be operating in silos, overwhelmed by the power of large carceral corporations. Communities could easily be pitted against each other, as evidenced by ICE's attempts to do so when faced with detention center closure.

Statewide, without DND, collective victories might not have taken place. DND has not only harnessed collective power, it has deepened the relationships among its members and has forged new ones. With DND, advocates can operate as a united front and set a powerful example for other states to follow.

Fight for Youth Justice.

The immigration system is not designed to care for children; instead, it largely holds children to the same standards as adults. The ILRC works towards a future in which the immigration system treats children as children, and where all children can find a safe place to call home, regardless of country of origin. We strive for systems in the United States (child welfare, juvenile justice, education) that treat immigrant children equitably while understanding their unique needs.

To carry out this work, the ILRC maintains a deep expertise in how immigration law and policy impact children. The ILRC uses that knowledge to support advocates' ability to protect children from the detention and deportation systems. The ILRC works at the intersection of the immigration system and the youth justice and child welfare systems. Over the course of decades, the ILRC has built understanding and expertise of these systems with a focus on the



unique issues that immigrant youth face in those systems.

Through our policy work, the ILRC pushes for an end to the detention of children, seeks to expand access to immigration benefits for children and young people, and engages in local and state policy work to ensure that young people who have interactions with the youth justice system do not then become entangled with the immigration system.

Changing Policies to End Immigration Enforcement.

Deportations tear families apart and impose lasting trauma on families and immigrant communities. The ILRC works with coalitions around the country to prevent these outcomes by reducing the threat of detention and deportation for all immigrant communities in the United States. Our goal is to protect as many people as possible from being identified, targeted for arrest and detention, and/or put in removal proceedings.

Because so many immigrants are apprehended as a result of contact with the criminal legal system, we focus particularly on local and state policy interventions to reduce collusion between local law enforcement and ICE. Our emphasis is on building intersectional coalitions with criminal justice partners to fight all forms of mass incarceration. We challenge the ever-growing DHS surveillance and data-sharing apparatus that tracks people, and we enact and share policies to reduce arrests and prevent local and state law enforcement agencies from transferring people to immigration detention.

The ILRC provides technical assistance to those fighting to end contracts between local and state actors and ICE, such as 287(g) agreements (which deputize state and local law enforcement to enforce federal immigration law), and seek to hold accountable their local elected officials who facilitate immigration arrests. The ILRC helps the immigrant rights movement understand how enforcement works, in order to better defend ourselves and our communities.



Leading at the Intersection of Criminal and Immigration Law.

At least 70% of immigration arrests in the interior of the country occur as a result of individuals' contact with the state criminal legal system and local law enforcement agencies. As a result, we cannot limit the fight for immigrant rights to the federal level. Protecting immigrant rights transpires primarily at the local and state levels as well as within the criminal legal system.

Engaging in criminal justice advocacy that reduces arrests, prosecutions, convictions, and incarceration decreases the number of individuals who are funneled into the arrest-to-deportation pipeline, and leads to reforms that are deeper, broader, and longer lasting. By shifting the terrain of the fight for immigrant rights, the ILRC seeks to unite immigrant rights and criminal justice reform efforts to be truly intersectional, nurturing effective coalitions, working towards shared policy outcomes, and building relationships that wield real power.

Advancing Immigrant Rights and Racial Equity in Texas.

In line with the work described above, the ILRC's work in Texas focuses on building capacity to pass and implement local policies that dismantle the arrest-to-deportation pipeline and decriminalize immigrants, and communities of color.

To further these goals, the ILRC advocates for local policies and cultivates partnerships that promote immigrant rights and justice for those accused of crimes. We seek to undercut one of our nation's most regressive anti-immigrant state laws, SB 4 (which effectively bans sanctuary cities in the state of Texas), and build power among impacted communities for long-term wins.

Since 2018, the ILRC has strategically anchored coalitions and campaign efforts. These efforts include the Houston Leads and San Antonio Stands coalitions. We have succeeded in reducing arrests by creating alternative forms of identification for those who cannot access traditional, government-issued IDs, passing local cite and release ordinances, and providing Know Your Rights information inside Texas jails.

We train and educate advocates as well as legal practitioners on the immigration consequences of crime and

deportation defense strategies. We host abolitionist and narrative workshops for hundreds of organizers across the state, and play a crucial role in bringing criminal justice and other issue-based advocates together to fight back against Texas Governor Abbott's attacks on immigrants. The ILRC's work includes fighting the racist and dangerous Operation Lone Star (a joint operation between the Texas Department of Public Safety and the Texas Military Department focused on the southern border with Mexico).

Federal Policy Advocacy.

At the federal level, the ILRC campaigns for a [New Way Forward](#) to decriminalize migration and repeal the harsh 1996 immigration laws that funnel immigrants from the criminal legal system to deportation and exile.

We expand the scope of legislative proposals to protect immigrants from contact with the criminal legal system and from convictions. This includes working closely with drug policy advocates to ensure reforms are inclusive for immigrants. We campaign for solutions rooted in racial justice by building partnerships and educating policy makers to reduce federal immigration enforcement entanglement with local policing, and position our efforts to fight the criminalization of immigrants as part of a larger package of reforms to the criminal legal system.

Immigrant Justice Network.

The Immigrant Justice Network (IJN) is a leading voice against the criminalization of immigrants in the United States. Grounded in racial justice values, we build power to defend the dignity of immigrants. We fight for a world where our communities are thriving and free from policing, deportation, and imprisonment.

IJN is comprised of four core members: the Immigrant Defense Project (IDP), the Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC), Just Futures Law (JFL), and the National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild (NIPNLG). Our network is also powered by five grassroots members: Families for Freedom, Grassroots Leadership, Puente Human Rights Movement, SEARAC and the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network (WAISN). IJN is guided by the leadership of an Advisory Board, comprised of five movement leaders impacted directly by the systems we seek to dismantle.

Since 2019, IJN has led The New Way Forward (NWF) Campaign, a multi-faceted campaign with long-term goals to: 1) energize and build a base around inclusive policies that dismantle the architecture of criminalization, detention, and deportation; 2) shift the narrative and public discourse around criminalization; 3) build support for these issues among policymakers and advocates across movements; and 4) advance federal legislation that repeals harsh 1996 immigration laws and decriminalizes migration.

The ILRC's work to dismantle immigration detention and enforcement, disrupt the arrest-to-deportation pipeline, and fight racial disparities in the criminal legal system is comprehensive, collaborative, energizing, and impactful.

However, the threats to our communities have become more critical and expansive. Our work requires strong infrastructure and adequate resources to ensure we can continue impactful interventions and advance our affirmative vision. We hope you will join us by robustly supporting our work.

For questions or more information about our work, please contact:

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