

6 NATIONAL DEMANDS

FOR PROSECUTORS

AN OVERVIEW:

To end mass incarceration and police violence, and the impact they are having on our communities, we must be clear about what we want.

We must build the power we need to force prosecutors to make the changes that matter most.

Squads are organizing and rallying their communities around these six demands.

1. END MONEY BAIL

Prosecutors must end the pointless and racially biased practice of money bail.

Money bail drives up mass incarceration and puts people in harm's way for no reason. It punishes people who have not even been convicted of a crime just because they are poor.

Hundreds of thousands of people are trapped in jail merely because they cannot pay the outrageously high bail required to get released, even though they have not even been convicted of a crime. Others fall prey to the for-profit bail bond industry while trying to come up with the money to get out, which can bankrupt them and their family.

4. END THE SECRECY

Prosecutors must practice transparency and share information about their offices.

Prosecutors have incredible power over the fate of people's lives, even entire communities. Like any official, they should not be able to keep secret what their offices do, or bury information they have about the police, court system or anything else the public deserves to know.

Prosecutors have access to incredible amounts of data, yet their lack of transparency means that we do not know if they are treating all people fairly and by the same standard, or letting police off the hook for violence and violation of our rights.

2. TREAT KIDS LIKE KIDS

Prosecutors must stop putting our children in adult jails and prisons.

Children don't belong in adult jails and prisons, experiences that can damage them forever and has nothing to do with community safety. We all know that children are not adults and need their own protected environment and should not be incarcerated at all.

An estimated 200,000 young people are caught up in the adult criminal justice system every year. It disrupts their education at a critical moment of development, exposes them to bullying and violence they are too young to defend against, and creates enduring psychological trauma by tearing them from their homes and support networks.

5. STOP ANTI-IMMIGRANT PROSECUTIONS

Prosecutors must stop separating families and removing people from their communities.

Prosecutors have become complicit—they are caving in to the right wing's brutal and unjust deportation campaign. Immigrants should not be targeted and used to drive up conviction rates when it routinely leads to unnecessary and unjust deportations.

Over the last decade, an estimated three million immigrants have been deported. Most of these deportations are unwarranted and often an excessive response for misdemeanors such as traffic violations and theft. Many of these deportations could not have happened without the involvement of local prosecutors.

3. STOP UNNECESSARY PROSECUTIONS

Prosecutors must stop unwarranted and unhelpful prosecutions of low-level offenses.

Racially biased over-charging and over-sentencing increases mass incarceration but doesn't make anyone safer. Low-level offenders face unjust and excessive sentences compared to their offenses. No one's life should be ruined because of a minor offense.

Across America, hundreds of thousands of people who pose no harm to public safety are sitting behind bars, often just because they are Black, Brown or poor. Criminalizing and incarcerating low-level offenses is ineffective in reducing crime. It also disproportionately impacts communities of color, while lining the pockets of prison profiteers.

6. HOLD POLICE ACCOUNTABLE

Prosecutors must do their jobs—prosecuting police officers when they break the law.

Prosecutors almost always stand in the way of accountability and justice when police officers and police leadership violate people's rights, tamper with evidence or testimony, take part in corruption or commit violence and harassment against our communities.

In 2015, 986 people across America were shot and killed by police officers, but prosecutors did not convict one police officer for murder or manslaughter. Prosecutors have the power to do the right thing, but we must build the power we need to make sure they do. Black people suffer not only from police murder, but from daily police harassment and abuse, which prevents us from feeling at home in our own communities, and ultimately drives up mass incarceration.

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