



American Friends Service Committee, Arizona Program

2015 Annual Report



**American Friends
Service Committee**

Quaker values In action

Message from the Director:

"May you live in interesting times."

The phrase is purported to be either a blessing or a curse, which aptly sums up the moment we find ourselves in, as interest in criminal justice reform has suddenly become en vogue.

In my 15 years of working on prisons and sentencing, I never would have imagined the change we are now seeing in the national conversation on these issues. For example, a US President has pardoned drug offenders, Congress is discussing a bill to change federal sentencing practices, and two presidential candidates have said they would abolish private prisons.



It's almost too much for us to keep up with! Fortunately, we have been able to increase our staff capacity to take on the new opportunities and challenges presented by the fast-moving discussion on these issues.

But there is much work left to do. Arizona, as always, is behind the curve on the reforms embraced by most other states. And the for-profit prison industry is poised to hijack sentencing reform and alternatives to immigrant detention by rebranding itself as providing reentry services, treatment, and community supervision.

Our long-standing work on these issues has positioned AFSC Arizona as a trusted source of information and leadership in the national movement for reform. This critical moment presents us with a historic opportunity to make substantive change and to prevent the further expansion of for-profit incarceration.

We need your support to tip the balance in the right direction, and make sure these "interesting times" are more blessing than curse. Thank you for your generosity.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Caroline Isaacs".

Caroline Isaacs, Program Director

Expanding Our Staff (and families)

Our office is growing by leaps and bounds! Through a generous grant from the Langeloth Foundation, we were able to hire **Emily Verdugo** to work on our Treatment Industrial Complex campaign for the next three years. Emily holds a Master in Public Management from Northern Arizona University and comes to us from working with the state Democratic Party. Emily is a native of Pinal County Arizona, and has seen the impact of prison expansion first-hand. She has served as a City Councilmember in Coolidge, Arizona and currently serves as Vice-Chair of the Arizona Democratic Party and Chairwoman of the Arizona Democratic Latino Caucus.



Another generous grant from the Ristad Foundation allowed us to hire two more amazing organizers for one year. **Grace Gamez** is a mother, activist and scholar, with a PhD in Justice Studies from Arizona State University, and a Master of Science in Mexican American Studies and Public Health from the University of Arizona. Her research coupled with her own personal experience in the system provides her with intimate knowledge regarding the structure, operation, and intended consequences of the criminal punishment system, particularly how it impacts women and their loved ones.

Rebecca Fealk has been focused on prison reform issues since 2011, when she was hired to design and implement the Yavapai Reentry Project, a prisoner reentry program for Yavapai County, AZ. Much of her policy research has focused on prisoner reentry barriers and the for-profit private prison industry. Rebecca graduated in 2015 with a Master in Public Administration from the University of Arizona, focusing in nonprofit management and criminal policy.



And last, but certainly not least, Associate Program Director Matthew Lowen and his wife, Shayna, welcomed a baby boy into the world in October of 2015. **Otis Henry Kessler-Lowen** is definitely the cutest addition to the AFSC family.

Reducing Prison Populations

Another Legislative Victory!

REDUCING CORRECTIONS COSTS

THROUGH SMART AND SAFE
POLICY SOLUTIONS



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For the fourth year in a row, we were successful in passing a progressive sentencing reform bill. HB2310 will allow two or more small counties to join forces to create a regional mental health court, using an intergovernmental agreement. The concept is akin to the old “circuit rider” courts, when judges would travel from town to town. This will help small rural counties with limited resources utilize this proven strategy without stretching their budgets. Mental health courts offer people with mental illnesses a chance to participate in treatment and supervision as an alternatives to incarceration. These programs will now be available in more Arizona counties, and will reduce the number of people with mental illnesses being sent to state prisons.

Meeting with Key Stakeholders

On July 8th, we convened a meeting at the Governor’s office with key stakeholders to discuss various sentencing reform options in advance of the legislative session. We brought in Marc Levin from Right on Crime and Mike Jones, the Chair of the Judiciary Committee in Alabama (a state that recently passed significant reforms). Arizona participants included:

Joe Cuffari: Governor’s Public Safety Policy Advisor

Bill Montgomery: County Attorney, Maricopa County

Sheila Polk: County Attorney, Yavapai County

Adam Driggs: Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee

Sonny Borrelli: Chair, House Military Affairs and Public Safety Committee

Leonard Gilroy: Director, Government Reform at the Reason Foundation



This meeting was a critical step toward building consensus around needed reforms.

Opposing Prison Expansion and For-Profit Incarceration

Stopping 3,000 Proposed Private Prison Beds.

The Governor's initial budget proposed \$50 million for new private prison beds. We immediately went to work organizing against the proposal.

We organized constituents to email and call legislators in advance of the DOC's budget hearing. We utilized social media by generating graphics individuals could post on Facebook highlighting the other important programs and services where that \$50 million could be better spent. And we created a hashtag, #50Million4AZ.



INSTEAD OF USING \$50 MILLION TO BUILD NEW PRISONS, LET'S SPEND IT ON:

Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers

#50million4AZ

We held a press conference at the state capitol in July calling on the Governor to scrap plans for the prison and instead invest in education, drug treatment, and other needed services.

This approach was very successful in getting legislators' attention as well as generating media coverage. We also provided key talking points/questions to legislators to ask during the hearing, which they did. As a result, even very conservative legislators were asking whether this spending was necessary. The Editorial Boards of three major papers panned the proposal. Even Sheriff Joe Arpaio came out in the press saying that for-profit prisons are a bad idea!

In the end, The Governor's initial request for 3,000 medium security private prison beds was cut by the Legislature to 2,000. A small victory, but given the influence of the private prison industry in Arizona, a victory nonetheless.



Responding to the Kingman Riots

Beginning July 1st, 2015, serious riots erupted in a prison in Kingman, Arizona operated by the for-profit prison company, Management and Training Corporation (MTC). Six prison guards were reported injured and the facilities were so badly damaged that over 1,000 prisoners had to be transferred elsewhere.

AFSCAZ published a report on the riots, which provides first-hand documentation from prisoners and staff, as well as a larger analysis informed by over 15 years of monitoring the for-profit prison industry and the Arizona Department of Corrections. The report is available at:

<https://afscarizona.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/afsckingmanassessment2015.pdf>

We held a community forum in September of 2015, convened by a diverse panel of leaders,



to hear testimony from those directly impacted and the public at large. The event was well attended, with over 75 people packing the room at Faith Lutheran Church in Phoenix.

The conveners included: Maria Alvarado, State Education Chair, LULAC; Ahmad Daniels, South Mountain Community College; Charles Fanniel, NAACP; State Representative Eric Meyer; and Rev. John Mireles, LULAC. The testimonies from families of prisoners, former prisoners, and other community members were collected and presented to the state legislature.

Mass Incarceration Investment Screen

In collaboration with our colleague Dalit Baum in the San Francisco office, we produced an online tool for scanning investments to determine if your 401K or stock portfolio includes corporations profiting from mass incarceration. Individuals can upload or type in any list of holdings, however long, in any format, and the tool will scan it to produce a report highlighting the issues of concern. It is the first such mapping of the U.S. for-profit incarceration industry, highlighting the companies involved in anything from facility management to food and commissary services, phone services, health care, and video visitation. For 13 of these companies, we provide an in-depth profile including a summary of divestment and boycott highlights so far. <http://investigate.afsc.org/screens/prisons>

The Treatment Industrial Complex

Emily attended and presented at six different events around the state and at national symposiums and conferences, reaching a broad audience to discuss the issue of net-widening through the privatization of community corrections, including halfway houses, treatment programs, and alternatives to incarceration,

In December, our letter to the editor was published in the *New York Times* regarding the use of GPS ankle bracelet monitors for women seeking asylum in the United States as part of Immigration and Customs Enforcement's "Alternatives to Detention" program. The contract for the ankle bracelets was awarded to the same company that also runs immigrant detention centers. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/27/opinion/immigrant-women.html?ref=opinion&r=1>

Marking 10 Years of Operation Streamline



Operation Streamline, a policy begun in 2005, mandates that nearly all undocumented immigrants crossing the Southern border in certain areas be prosecuted through the federal criminal justice system, a departure from previous practices when most immigration cases were handled exclusively within the civil immigration system.

Matthew Lowen has been our point-person on this issue. He wrote a book chapter on Operation Streamline for an edited volume on immigration issues that is forthcoming. He has helped coordinate a regional network collaborating to end the criminal prosecution of immigrants and Operation Streamline.

Tucson was one of several communities across the country that took part in days of action to mark the 10 year anniversary of this failed program. Matt spoke at the press conference regarding the role of for-profit prison corporations in the Operation Streamline process: <http://www.tucsonweekly.com/TheRange/archives/2015/12/16/operation-streamline-10-years-of-criminalizing-immigrants-mass-incarceration-for-profit>.

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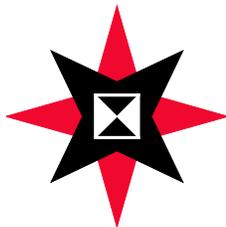
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To earmark your contribution for the Arizona office*, simply write “Arizona office” in the bottom left corner of your check.

**Please note that if you do not explicitly state on your check or otherwise in writing that you want your donation to go to Arizona, it will automatically be deposited into AFSC’s national general fund.*

THANK YOU!



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