

Reimagining Democracy

Storytelling for Social Justice Zine

Created By Suffolk County Jail-Based Voting Ambassadors
& Civic Education Volunteers

Edited By Dr. DeAnza A. Cook

Empowering Descendant Communities to Unlock Democracy

First Look Edition | Boston, MA | September 2025



Why We Made This Zine

OUR JAIL-BASED VOTING AMBASSADORS

Jail-Based Voting (JBV) Ambassadors are registered voters and incarcerated leaders who participate regularly in civic education programs organized by nonpartisan volunteers with the **Empowering Descendant Communities to Unlock Democracy (EDC)** project. JBV Ambassadors practice community leadership through social justice storytelling and by advocating for voter protections and universal voting rights. Even while volunteers are away, they do the work of motivating others in their orbit to learn about politics and civic power, in addition to exercising their right to vote every election cycle.

OUR APPROACH TO CIVIC EDUCATION BEHIND THE WALL

Reflection Circles for Reimagining Democracy create a unique learning environment where JBV Ambassadors and voting rights volunteers come together to share, study, and strategize. During circle, we read about how civics works, write about our visions for social change, and discuss current events and political challenges directly affecting our communities. Circle is where we make sense of complex realities in US democracy and talk through strategies of everyday resistance, collective resilience, and civic empowerment in our immediate future (**Sign - Michael J. Malette Our Pledge on pg. 12**) and for future generations.

Together, we reflect on personal stories and envision transformative paths toward true justice for all of us—listening deeply to learn from one another's experiences. For local, state, and federal elections, we are working to dismantle disenfranchisement alongside Jail-Based Voting Ambassadors in Suffolk County and EDC organizers statewide. We aim to abolish legislative barriers to the ballot box for incarcerated citizens across the Commonwealth. Collectively, we meet people where they are. **We are a storytelling community for social justice.**

Having a voice is a basic right of any human being.

- Akil Jackson

The right to vote is essential in a democracy, yet not recognized as such in all states.

- Steven Fike

Everyone should have the right to vote no matter their background.

Democracy is a powerful system with a lot of doors.

- Michael J. Malette

Coming together to learn about voting rights is great because most of us who are incarcerated don't know that we can still vote.

- Austin Tate

Why We Made This Zine

We host voter registration workshops inside of housing units at county facilities and facilitate civic learning circles, along with other civic engagement programs, focused on the theme of **unlocking our power** despite the limits of US democracy.

Institutional roadblocks prevent too many incarcerated people from taking civics courses and participating in elections that affect their lives and communities. As a consequence, casting ballots behind bars represents far more than just electoral participation, especially when combined with meaningful civic education and engagement programs. Our holistic approach to civic empowerment enables everyone to explore a wide range of social issues they care about, including new issues they learn about for the first time during circles. We **make civics matter** by focusing on relevant political education that resonates with us and the diverse communities we come from. Inside jails and prisons, many believe as one officer told us: “We don’t do democracy *here*.” Still, we persist—because the freedom, justice, and liberation we seek for ourselves and each other reaches far beyond any walls.

TRUE JUSTICE SPEAKS THROUGH STORIES OF RESILIENCE AND LIBERATION.

Our Zine, *Reimagining Democracy*, is a self-made booklet of real stories and calls to action centered on the theme of Storytelling for Social Justice. As human rights, DEI, and social justice groups face attacks at home and abroad, we strive to wield the power of storytelling across walls to amplify voices, expose systemic injustices, and ignite collective action for transformative change.

This Zine is a tool for **transforming "silence into action,"** in the spirit of Black mother, poet, warrior, Audre Lorde’s rallying cry. So pass it on, spark real conversations, and take time to do reflective activities with comrades, new and old, so that all of us can **contribute to reimagining democracy now and for the future.**

During Circle, we get to talk about things that we don’t talk about on the unit.
- Zykari Hamilton

Circles bring people together to learn and build more relationships with our community.
- Albert Brown

The best part of Circles is listening to people’s stories and hearing their experiences.

To create a space and oasis that values people is so powerful.
- Aileen Kearney

I’ve learned so much about myself, my peers, and mainly, politics.
- Salah-Alexander

Method 2 My Madness

by Sulay*

Corruption continues because the monsters protect their minions and the disenfranchised don't have a voice for their opinions... So the oppressors continue their oppression, while attempting to teach the rebellious a lesson... You see it every time a great mind tries to edify his kind the supremacist find a way, or design to push the fire in him to the side... THIS TIME... It was in this man's stride, in his African Black Pride, they knew what fires he could ignite, so they set fire to his life... They glimpsed his IQ and vision and made immediate plans to dead him... They burned his life's worth, and said let's blame him, stick him in a dungeon call it protection... Look how he acts he's prone to violence, but my minds my greatest weapon... I'm gon' do what a Phoenix does when it spreads its wings coming ..up ..out ..that ..dust...

***Sulay is a devout man of Allah (God) and a poet who loves Black people currently incarcerated at Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center.**

Education & Empowerment as Liberation

by Steven “Bama” Fike*

Being accepted into Reflection Circles was meaningful to me in numerous ways. Trusted Teachers: Dr. Cook being paired with Pastor Hobbs, plus The Setting of Circle with flameless tea lights, lavender-scented, purple flower petals (representing royalty) and Affirmation Journals, Cards, and Stickers for us to take and share made the experience take on a life of its own.

I actually voted in the 2024 election. I never could have been able to so without the guidance of said teachers....(continued)

***Bama hails from the southern state of Ala-*bama*. He was formerly incarcerated at The Suffolk County House of Correction in Boston, but has since been transferred back down south.**

Education & Empowerment as Liberation

by Steven “Bama” Fike

Reflection Circles must be fully and meaningfully implemented throughout Boston, Massachusetts. This form of community-engaged, civic education should be implemented everywhere and exported to other states, especially Southern States---like Alabama---with a long and brutal history of enslavement and incarceration in the US!

Empowering myself and others around me requires open discussions around political topics, big and small. In Reflection Circles, I have a VOICE. My experiences matter. I feel empowered. Dr. Cook, Pastor Hobbs, and other EDC Organizers on a voluntary mission have opened my eyes, ears, and most of all, my mind, which is priceless and will last a lifetime.

My Truth & Testimony

by Mr. Joe Dyer*

My name is Joseph Dyer. I have lived in the city of Boston my whole life. I am a Black Man who the system got a 11 years old. I have continued to go through the vicious cycle of housing within a system that doesn't rehabilitate inmates. In a sense, I have become institutionalized. It's sad, but I just want to help others follow a different path. I'm doing my best.

I am aware that Boston can be very racist against minorities. The police start with 10, 11, 12 year old Black Boys. They stop and search for weapons by violating the bodies of young Black boys, including feeling their groins and backsides, which provokes them to rebel against such physical violations....(continued)

***Jail-Based Voting Ambassador Mr. Joe Dyer was raised in the streets of Boston in the 1980s and has been involved in the carceral system in Massachusetts for more than 40 years.**

My Truth & Testimony

by Mr. Joe Dyer

One of the biggest problems that I have experienced is getting help finding housing before I'm released from prison to the streets, where it's survive or die. There are no more shelters, and it's hard trying to start over with nothing, but \$50 in your pocket and nowhere to sleep, eat, or find help with locating affordable housing and a decent job with a livable wage.

It's so hard that people come right back to jail. The cycle just keep repeating itself because not enough people care to know or understand that you can't release someone from jail or prison with zero help to change their life in society....(continued)

My Truth & Testimony

by Mr. Joe Dyer

With better access to the ballot box and civic education courses behind the wall, incarcerated voters and residents can become more politically engaged and enlightened about what's going on in the world of politics.

Building a more inclusive democracy, in spite of incarceration, matters to me because coming together in any way to make change and better our situations is good for all of us.

Now is the time for change so we can create better ways for all of us to thrive in today's world....(continued)

My Truth & Testimony

by Mr. Joe Dyer

Time is on our side, and History is on our side. We can build winning campaigns together.

Please do everything necessary so we can become more empowered to make the changes we need and more enlightened about how power works in our society in general.

Thank you for engaging with our historic work, and thank you for sharing this zine along with our collective calls to action with other people you know and care about in your communities.

Peace, Blessings & Power,
Mr. Joseph Dyer

Reflection Questions

TAKE TIME TO REFLECT: Read the questions below by yourself, with a partner, or in a small circle of people in your community.

When systems try to silence marginalized voices—especially those rooted in Black pride and liberation—what does it take for truth and justice to rise from the ashes like a phoenix?

When those in power destroy a person's work, reputation, or freedom to keep them from inspiring others, what responsibilities do we have, as comrades, to keep their vision alive?

ENGAGE WITH US: Email your responses to **Dr. Cook** at cook.2167@osu.edu OR Mail them in to **Healing Our Land, Inc. (HOLI)** at [670 Washington St, Dorchester, MA 02124](https://www.healingourland.org/).

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Excerpt from Stefanie Bohde, “The Underground Railroad Quilt Code: A History of African-American Quilting from Ancient Practices to the Civil War Times,” *Oakland Journal* 8 (Winter 2005): 71-72.

“Unknown to most people, **quilting has also been a tool for communication and has been a long-standing tradition in many different cultures.**

A quilting pattern often overlooked in today’s society is the UNDERGROUND RAILROAD QUILT CODE. Used during the time of abolition and the Civil War, this visual code sewn into the patterns of quilts readied slaves for their upcoming escape and provided them directions when they were on their way to freedom.

When the time came, the first of the ten quilts was laid out by fellow slaves either in the window or on a clothesline, until all the escaping slaves had gotten the message. Then the next one would be laid out and so on, until the slaves passing through the plantations had arrived to safety.

This code was kept secret for years, for secrecy and honor are two things most valued in African tradition. Many times, ancestors of some of these escaped slaves recall being told the story of the quilt code, and then warned against disclosing the information. Ozella McDaniel Williams was an elderly African woman who sold her quilts in a marketplace down in South Carolina. Mrs. Williams was the one who finally broke the silence about the Underground Railroad quilt code.”

(continue reading on next page)

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

“[Mrs. Williams] restates the code for Tobin and Dobard’s book, *Hidden in Plain View* (**bolded** words are the quilt patterns in this code): ‘There are five square knots on the quilt every two inches apart. They escaped on the fifth knot on the tenth pattern and went to Ontario, Canada.

The **monkey wrench** turns the **wagon wheel** toward Canada on a **bear’s paw** trail to the **crossroads**. Once they got to the crossroads, they dug a **log cabin** on the ground. **Shoofly** told them to dress up in cotton and satin **bow ties** and go to the cathedral church, get married and exchange **double wedding rings**. **Flying geese** stay on the **drunkard’s path** and follow the **stars**” (Tobin and Dobard 22-23).

Today’s quilts have time-honored African roots. ‘Strip construction, large-scale designs, strong contrasting colors and variations from symmetrical patterns all appear to reflect textile patterns found in parts of Africa’ (*America’s Quilting History*) Various symbols in African writing systems or codes were often adapted and included in quilt patterns. ‘The African symbols of *bogolanfini*, *nsibidi*, and *vai* employ ideographs---abstract configurations---in conveying messages. They are part of an African textile tradition in which abstract, figurative, and geometric designs are used separately, and in combination, to endow the cloth with protective power and to signal information’ (Tobin and Dobard, 41-42).”

(continue reading on next page)

SOURCE: Stefanie Bohde, “The Underground Railroad Quilt Code: A History of African-American Quilting from Ancient Practices to the Civil War Times, *Oakland Journal* 8 (Winter 2005): 72,76.

“Common African symbols that have been adapted into quilting patterns include the checkerboard, the hourglass, and the pinwheel. Significantly, each of these symbols is also part of the Underground Railroad quilt code.

Color and stitches were also important pieces of African culture brought over to colonial America. A specific tradition brought over from Africa is the strip quilt. Many times, stripes of cloth called *kente* were woven together in order to make one big blanket. Scholars consider this strip quilting technique to be the ancestor of modern African quilts.

Colors and combinations of colors often held protective meanings. When used in quilts, **blue** was considered to be a very spiritual color, and the color combination of blue and white is considered to be protective by the Mende and Ibo tribes. **Red** and **white** used together symbolized Shango, the Yoruba god of storm.

As Henry Louis Gates says, **‘The African slave, despite the horrors of the Middle Passage, did not sail to the New World alone. These African slaves brought with them their metaphysical systems, their languages, their terms for order, and their expressive cultural practices which even the horrendous Middle Passage and the brutality of everyday life on the plantation could not effectively obliterate’** (quoted in Tobin and Dobard, 34).”

SOURCE: Stefanie Bohde, “The Underground Railroad Quilt Code: A History of African-American Quilting from Ancient Practices to the Civil War Times,” *Oakland Journal* 8 (Winter 2005): 76-78.

Reflection Questions

TAKE TIME TO REFLECT: Read the questions below by yourself, with a partner, or in a small circle of people in your community.

Who Counts as a Citizen?

Back when these quilts were made, many Black people were denied basic rights. What do the hidden messages in the Underground Railroad quilts tell us about who was treated as a “real” citizen in America—and who wasn’t throughout history?

How Does (Re)Imagination Challenge Power?

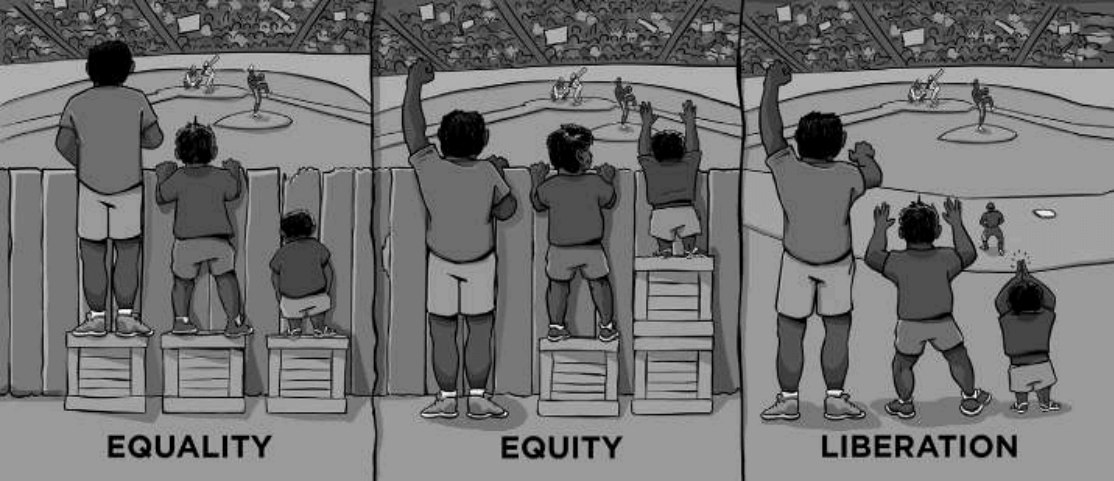
How did African-American quilting traditions—especially those associated with the Underground Railroad—function as both a form of cultural expression and a tool for survival and resistance? In what ways can creative practices today serve similar purposes for civic action?

What Do True Stories Teach Us About the Past and About How We Shape the Future?

Some parts of the quilt code story come from history, and some come from oral tradition. How should we think about stories that may not be physically documented in writing or kept in historical archives but still carry meaning, pride, and lessons for the future?

CONNECT WITH US:

Email your responses to Dr. Cook at cook.2167@osu.edu OR
Mail them in to Healing Our Land, Inc. (HOLI) at 670
[Washington St, Dorchester, MA 02124](mailto:670).



In a simple sense, Equality means **treating everyone the same**. Equality is important and can be a useful strategy for advocating for social justice in some cases. But, Equality isn't enough to liberate all of us.

Equity looks like **providing for every person according to their needs**. Equity encourages us to carefully consider everyone's different abilities and unique circumstances while working toward social justice together.

Liberation requires **eliminating borders and systemic barriers for all of us**. Liberation dismantles harmful structures that create inequality to make space for creative solutions that embrace transformative change.

HOW ARE WE WORKING TOWARD EQUALITY, EQUITY, & LIBERATION? Teaching people skills they can take anywhere. **Partnering** with grassroots groups. **Practicing** growth-minded mentorship. **Expanding** access to safe affordable housing. **Providing** safety and healthcare for the unhoused. **Creating** careers, not jails. **Building** community coalitions for transformative change. **Filing** grievances. **Publishing** public reports. **Raising** awareness about rights violations. **Resisting** systemic oppression. **Sharing** power. **Organizing** alongside directly impacted people. **WHAT ARE Y'ALL WORKING TOWARD ?**

Unlocking Democracy in Massachusetts



In 2000, Massachusetts passed a constitutional amendment that *took away* voting rights from people incarcerated for a felony conviction. This stripping of rights was in response to political organizing happening in prison. Our incarcerated community members deserve the basic right to vote. The Empowering Descendant Communities to Unlock Democracy project and allies aim to get voting rights restoration on the statewide ballot.



We are led by the African American Coalition Committee who work to dismantle barriers to political participation from behind the wall in MCI-Norfolk.

Get Involved:

This fall, we will need to gather ~75,000 signatures in roughly three months. If you would like to add your name to this effort, please take a minute to fill out our pledge form: <https://tinyurl.com/uvrpledge>



Contact Us email EDCtoUnlockDemocracyMA@gmail.com or visit <https://www.edc-unlockdemocracyma.com/>



Tell Your Friends and Family — It's Time to Restore Voting Rights to All in Massachusetts

In 2000, Massachusetts passed a constitutional amendment to *take away* voting rights from people incarcerated for a felony conviction, in response to political organizing behind the wall. It is long overdue to move in the other direction — help us put voting rights restoration on the statewide ballot.

How YOU Can Get Involved:

This fall, we will need to gather tens of thousands of signatures in roughly three months.

- Ask friends and family members to fill out our pledge form: <https://tinyurl.com/uvrpledge>. (If they are a Massachusetts resident, make sure they *register to vote* before signing!)
- Once the Attorney General approves the language, organizers will reach out with dates/locations for signature collection near them.

Scan the QR code or visit the URL!



<https://tinyurl.com/uvrpledge>

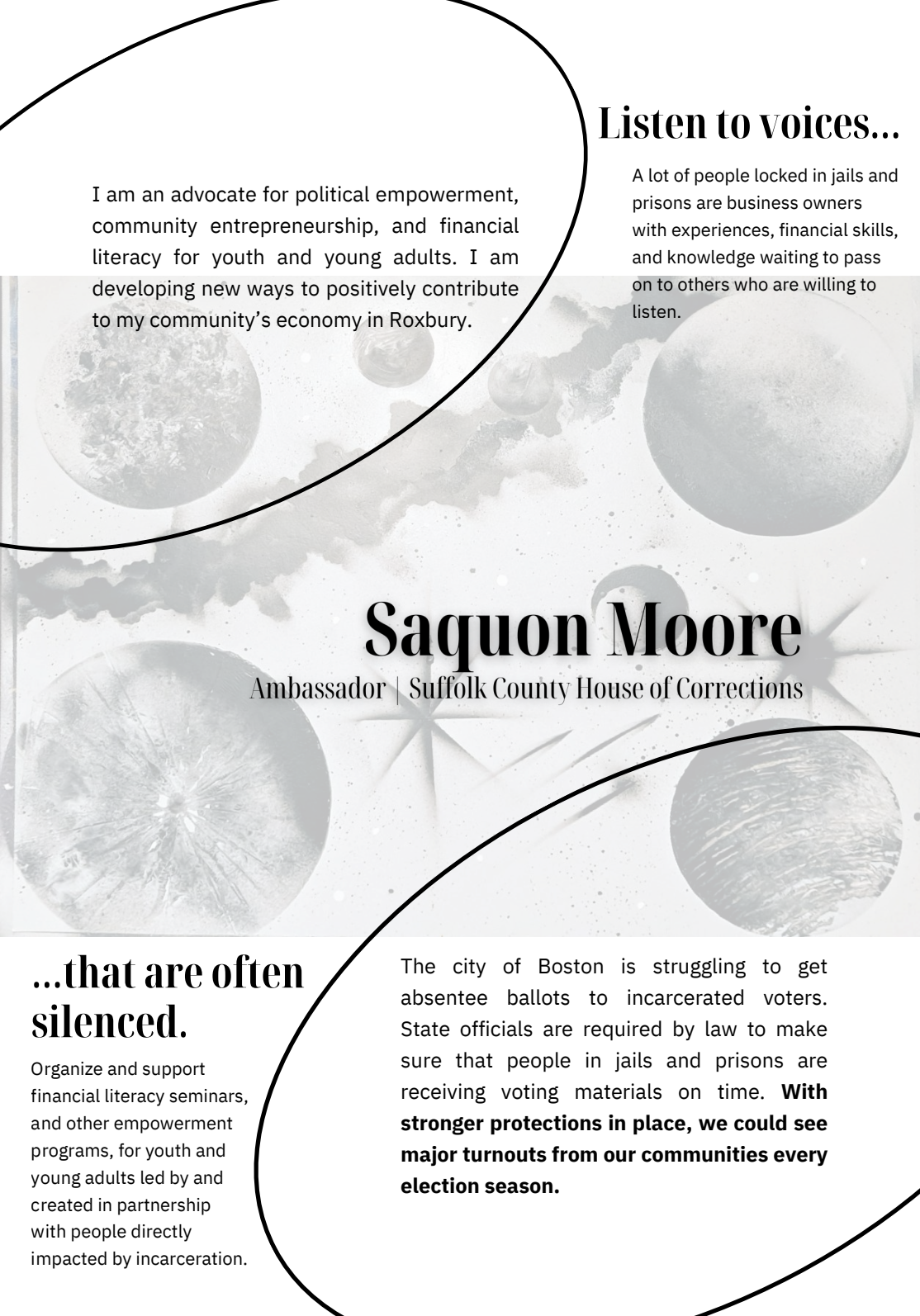
Who We Are

The Empowering Descendant Communities to Unlock Democracy project is committed to ensuring that democracy does not stop at prisons and jails in Massachusetts. It is a collaborative project between the Democracy Behind Bars Coalition, the African American Coalition Committee and more!



Contact Us

email EDctoUnlockDemocracyMA@gmail.com
or visit <https://www.edc-unlockdemocracyma.com/>



I am an advocate for political empowerment, community entrepreneurship, and financial literacy for youth and young adults. I am developing new ways to positively contribute to my community's economy in Roxbury.

Listen to voices...

A lot of people locked in jails and prisons are business owners with experiences, financial skills, and knowledge waiting to pass on to others who are willing to listen.

Saquon Moore

Ambassador | Suffolk County House of Corrections

...that are often silenced.

Organize and support financial literacy seminars, and other empowerment programs, for youth and young adults led by and created in partnership with people directly impacted by incarceration.

The city of Boston is struggling to get absentee ballots to incarcerated voters. State officials are required by law to make sure that people in jails and prisons are receiving voting materials on time. **With stronger protections in place, we could see major turnouts from our communities every election season.**

The Road to Justice

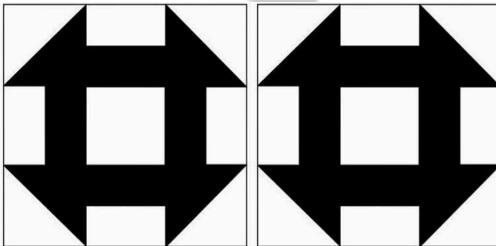
By Saquon Moore

United we stand up for Justice.

Seek out groups of people from different communities dedicated to common goals and strategies. It's okay to start small.

Teach comrades to take our struggles seriously and show support for Justice, Equality, and Freedom movements through sustained commitment and contributions.

Throw a wrench in their game.



WRENCH

Before the abolition of slavery in the United States, this Underground Railroad quilt code instructed people to GATHER TOOLS to use along the journey to freedom for building shelters, finding directions to safe passageways, and defending one another from slave catchers and slave patrols.

Meet people...

I am a warrior, a father, and a God fearing man who loves our people, Black, Brown, Immigrant, and Incarcerated.

Politics matters because people need shelter, food, education, employment, and healthcare to succeed and thrive in our society.

Indrick L. Rubin

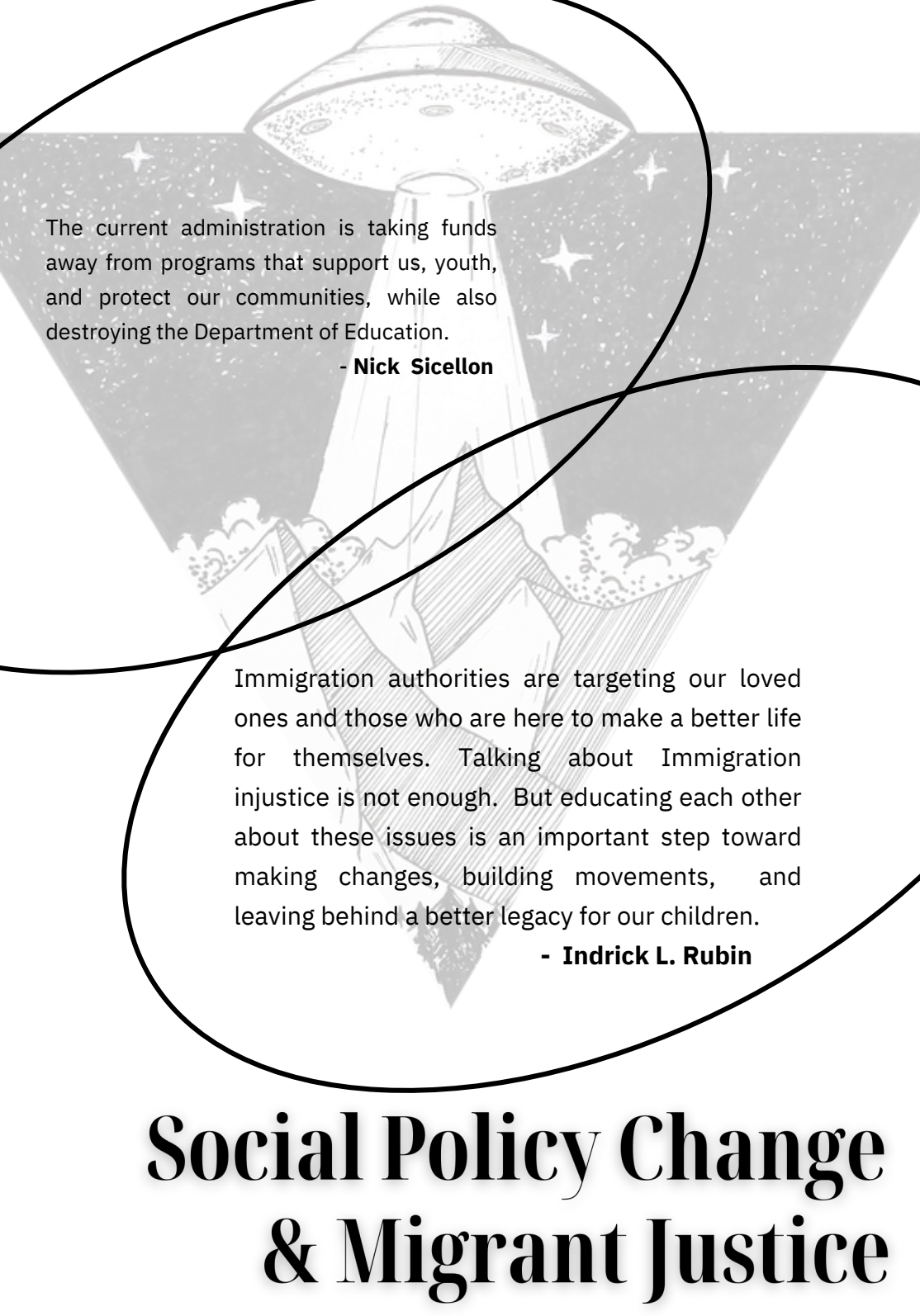
Ambassador | Suffolk County House of Corrections

...where they are.

Our communities need to understand what voting can accomplish. Our youth need to learn and know how much voting rights matter.

There is a severe lack of civic education in our communities. We must **empower current and future generations through transformative educational opportunities.**

We can create safe places for people to free their minds. Empowering learning environments build up the courage to push for positive changes that last.



The current administration is taking funds away from programs that support us, youth, and protect our communities, while also destroying the Department of Education.

- **Nick Sicellon**

Immigration authorities are targeting our loved ones and those who are here to make a better life for themselves. Talking about Immigration injustice is not enough. But educating each other about these issues is an important step toward making changes, building movements, and leaving behind a better legacy for our children.

- **Indrick L. Rubin**

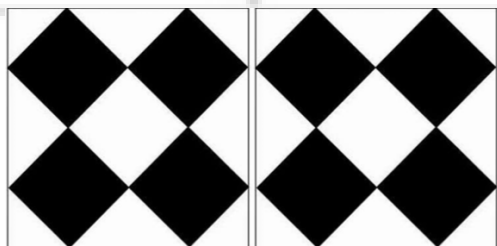
Social Policy Change & Migrant Justice

Freedom Is More Than a Dream

By Indrick L. Rubin

Be there for Immigrants. Be there for Incarcerated people who may feel alienated from society. Be there for those who are searching for a better life.

Meet them at the border or at the prison gates. Share knowledge of how and where to find resources in order to help them navigate the crossroads of life.



CROSSROADS

This Underground Railroad quilt code symbolized HOPE for people escaping enslavement by foot to Ohio and by boat to Canada.

Stay Engaged...

I am an army veteran who has been to war in Afghanistan. I attended college at Johnson & Wales and worked as a licensed electrician in Massachusetts with Local 103.

We are genuinely invested in each other's survival and positive growth.

Akil Jackson

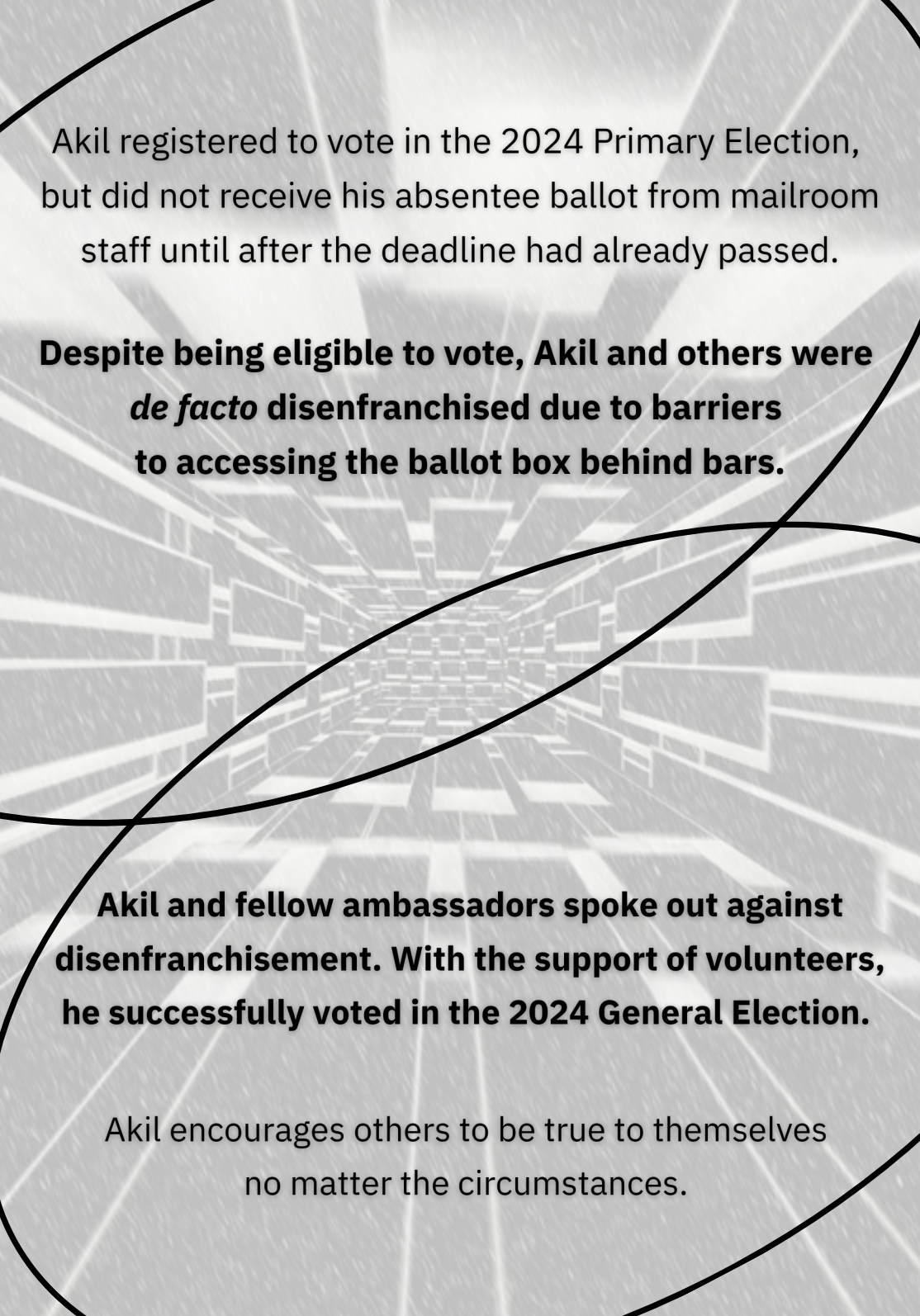
Ambassador | Suffolk County House of Corrections

...and follow though.

A more inclusive democracy requires empowering and educating our communities from our elders to our youth.

One of the biggest problems that I have experienced is being disrespected by officers verbally. Every single officer is inconsistent with other officers regarding rules. A lack of communication among staff causes conflict and chaos.

For too long this population has been silenced. Why? **We're people who** not only care for our communities but also **contribute to society** one way or another.



Akil registered to vote in the 2024 Primary Election, but did not receive his absentee ballot from mailroom staff until after the deadline had already passed.

Despite being eligible to vote, Akil and others were *de facto* disenfranchised due to barriers to accessing the ballot box behind bars.

Akil and fellow ambassadors spoke out against disenfranchisement. With the support of volunteers, he successfully voted in the 2024 General Election.

Akil encourages others to be true to themselves no matter the circumstances.

From Chains to Hard Hats

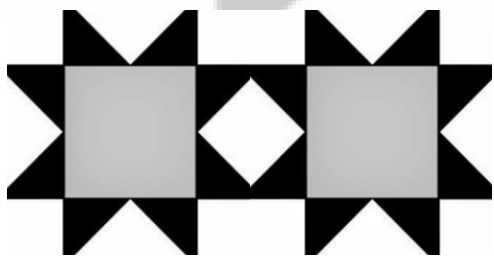
By Akil Jackson

Abolish prison pipelines.

Generate pathways for people to go from jail cells to gainful employment after release.

Follow the North Star, which goes back to Biblical times, subconsciously.

**Help each other find direction.
Search for Guidance along the way.**



NORTH STAR

One of the most famous symbols of the Underground Railroad, the North Star, also called the Evening Star, directed freedom seekers to “LOOK TO THE SKIES” to navigate their way out of slaveholding territories.

Share Knowledge...

I am a wholehearted, caring person who loves to be a problem solver and make people smile, whether they're having a good or a bad day.

We need more classes so that we can have more time to learn about politics.

Albert Brown

Ambassador | Suffolk County House of Corrections

...and show support.

Participate in community programs, show up to public events, and stay in contact with incarcerated people.

I support the movement to protect and restore voting rights for incarcerated people because **we have important voices that also need to be heard.**

Being able to cast my vote and be a part of society makes me feel civically engaged. Having more chances to go to more educational programs has expanded my knowledge of how politics works.

Create youth programs...

Meaningful work experiences set young people up for financial success in the future.

I witness everyday how the cost of food and rent makes it hard for families to keep a full fridge and a safe place to live for their loved ones. Having safe spaces to talk about politics helps us envision ways of making important economic changes that empower our communities.

Zykaris Hamilton

Ambassador | Suffolk County House of Corrections

...that are fun and rewarding.

Make more empowering spaces for youth to lead, work, and contribute to their communities.

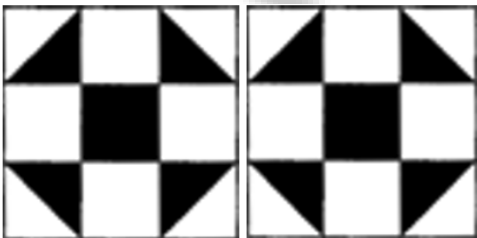
My mom did not have a lot of money to put into fun programs, like going to basketball camp. That's why I support community programs that invest in youth and offer important opportunities for young adults, like me, to make money and learn valuable skills.

Invest in Young People

By Zykari Hamilton

Help youth give back to our communities through public service and paid employment opportunities that teach them lifelong skills.

When a parent or caregiver doesn't have enough money to pay for their child to participate in youth programs, work with families to provide free alternatives for kids in our communities.



SHOOFLY

As fugitives fled slave plantations in search of freedom, this Underground Railroad quilt code identified a GUIDE who would assist them with getting to their next destination.

I am a man who advocates for equal opportunity and organizes against corruption in our criminal legal system.

Get Out...

Everyone is born the same, and everyone bleeds the same. We all make mistakes. When life throws us curve balls, all of us should have a fair chance to find Justice.

Nicholas Sicellon

Ambassador | Suffolk County House of Corrections

...of your comfort zone.

People in power want us to give up easily, so it's up to us to make the choice to continue pushing forward.

In today's society, we have too many corrupt police officers, lawyers, and Judges. Let's find ways to **fix things that help people and change things that don't.**

Prioritize holding elected officials, judges, prosecutors, and police accountable for not following the law and for locking people up using dirty tactics. A lot of families have incarcerated loved ones struggling against injustice in the court system. Our families need legal advocates and defense attorneys who will **fight with us to protect our human rights.**

Freedom From Corruption

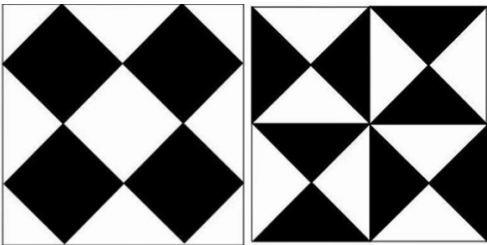
By Nicholas Sicellon

Steps We Can Take To End Corruption Within The US Punishment System:

#1: Change the way people become Judges. Instead of relying on appointments, hold judicial elections.

#2: Decrease discrimination by sanctioning Judges who demonstrate a habit of making unfair rulings in similar cases in the same counties where they worked previously as defense attorneys and district attorneys.

#3: Hold the police accountable when they lie and skip protocols. Stop justifying and overlooking harmful actions. The same thing goes for district attorneys.



CROSS BOWS

A combination of two Underground Railroad quilt codes, Crossroads and Bow Ties, Cross Bows stands for HOPE and COURAGE to challenge corrupt systems and TO CHANGE unequal punishment practices that overwhelmingly target Black and Brown people.

Choose something different...

We all have the ability to change for the better.

I am a man of few who ponders his purpose. I am a father of one who only wishes the best for his child. I am a lover of art, music, people, and culture. I am someone who hopes for more reform in today's society.

Kareem

Ambassador | Suffolk County House of Corrections

...and recognize that your way is not the only way.

Take advantage of turning points in your life to embrace change without fear.

The moment I realized that I would no longer be a passive victim to systemic injustices, I felt free. In that moment, I decided to take a stand because as the saying goes: a person who does not stand for something will fall for anything.

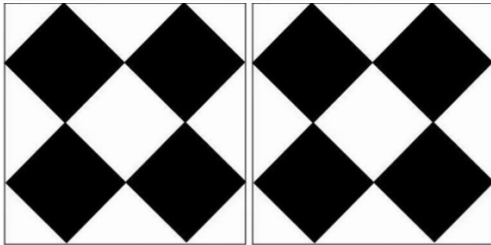
Beyond Social Media

By Kareem

Fear and negativity on social media platforms are rotting our relationships, keeping our kids distracted, and making our communities more unsafe.


Promote positivity online. Show people step-by-step examples of how to make a difference in politics. Create pages that share information using plain language about what's going on in government. And protect people from retaliation from law enforcement for exercising their political rights.

Hold spaces that also bring people together in real life, especially people without access to social media.



CROSSROADS

This Underground Railroad quilt code symbolized HOPE for people escaping enslavement by foot to Ohio and by boat to Canada.



All of the pay cuts are causing troubles in my community. Groups of people are losing jobs that are needed under the guise of “saving money” - for the government and corporations.

- Jay

Economic Justice

As an individual who relies on resources in the inner city in at risk urban neighborhoods whose households are sustained by \$0-24,000 in gross income a year, what concerns me most is the quality of services provided by commonwealth (state) employees to communities they serve, like mine.

- Abigail Mojica

I am a person with a strong mindset due to the society we live in.

Be a mentor...

Career mentorship matters. Youth and adults in our communities should have more opportunities to work with successful business mentors they admire.

Emmanuel Casseus

Ambassador | Suffolk County House of Corrections

...who loves to learn.

People are more likely to succeed when they are connected to role models who have accomplished results in a career that they're interested in exploring.

We have to be open-minded and be unafraid to adjust our mindsets as society changes and as we push for changes we want to see in society.

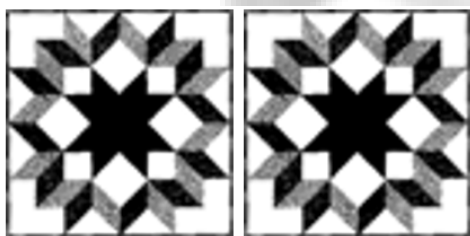
2RR (Too Resilient Railroad)

By Emmanuel Casseus

Form groups of strong leaders with deep ties to our communities.

Focus on empowerment and confidence building. Teach people the tools of successful living.

Be part of a plug-and-play system that pushes our community FORWARD WITHOUT FEAR of losing.



CARPENTER'S WHEEL

This Underground Railroad quilt code signified the craft skills and courage to “Steal Away” (a popular spiritual song sung by slaves) to freedom.

This symbol emboldened people to “RUN WITH FAITH” toward territories without slavery.

Incarceration...

The environment of jails is oftentimes too toxic for people to make the positive changes they need to improve their lives.

I am a safe haven for people who need someone to lean on. I'm a believer that no one in power is too "good" to help people in lesser positions of power. I want people to know that we are fighting for justice with you.

Jay
Ambassador | Suffolk County House of Corrections

...isn't
rehabilitative.

More leadership is key. Leaders who have overcome messed up situations, who actually care (not just talk) about transformational change, and who want to see all of us win and do better for each other.

I did all the paperwork and everything on my end to be able to vote in the Primary Election in 2024. But the officers upstairs were slow with getting our ballots to us, so I and several guys on my unit unfortunately missed the deadline to vote.

Having **direct access to the ballot box** would eliminate mailing delays and other institutional challenges to voting that we face every election cycle.

Chains Being Broken

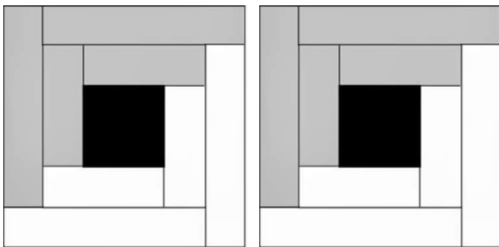
By Jay

See people for who they are, not what they're charged for.

There are innocent people behind bars today fighting for their freedom in the court system. Our support helps them have a fair chance at freedom.

Put people in positions of power, such as lawyers, judges, officers, parole board members etc., who are open-minded and not one-sided.

Once one person gets out, turn around and help someone else get out next.



LOG CABIN

When enslaved people emancipated themselves by running away, this Underground Railroad quilt code represented a SAFE HOUSE with friends and comrades awaiting their arrival.