

Aligning Corrections Policy with
Vermont's Constitution:

Fair Wages & Consumer Protections
for
Incarcerated Individuals

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INVOLUNTARY SERVITUDE,
EXCEPT AS A PUNISHMENT
FOR CRIME WHEREOF
THE PARTY SHALL HAVE
BEEN DULY CONVICTED,
SHALL EXIST WITHIN
THE UNITED STATES,
OR ANY PLACE SUBJECT
TO THEIR JURISDICTION.

~ THIRTEENTH AMENDMENT,
UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

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Los Angeles

Emancipation Proclamation
January 1, 1863

Juneteenth
June 19, 1865

Ratification of 13th Amendment
December 6, 1865

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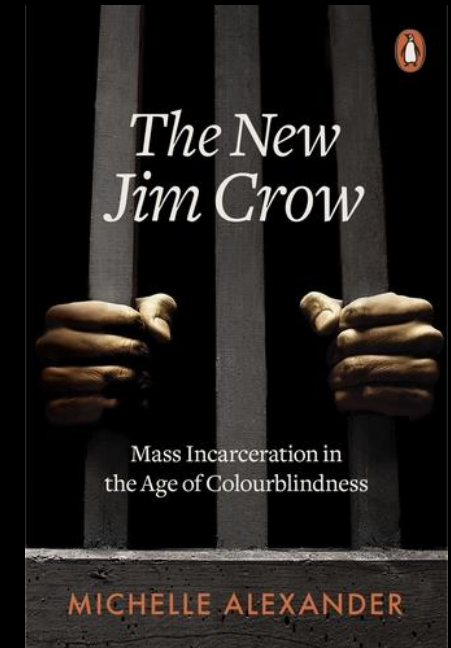
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Lois DeAntonio

Emancipation Proclamation
January 1, 1863

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Article 1. [All persons born free; their natural rights; slavery prohibited]

That all persons are born equally free and independent, and have certain natural, inherent, and unalienable rights, amongst which are the enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing and protecting property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety; therefore no person born in this country, or brought from over sea, ought to be holden by law, to serve any person as a servant, slave or apprentice, after arriving to the age of twenty-one years, unless bound by the person's own consent, after arriving to such age, or bound by law for the payment of debts, damages, fines, costs, or the like.

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Article 1. [All persons born free; their natural rights; slavery and indentured servitude prohibited]

That all persons are born equally free and independent, and have certain natural, inherent, and unalienable rights, amongst which are the enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing and protecting property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety; therefore ~~no person born in this country, or brought from oversea, ought to be holden by law, to serve any person as a servant, slave or apprentice, after arriving to the age of twenty one years, unless bound by the person's own consent, after arriving to such age, or bound by law for the payment of debts, damages, fines, costs, or the like~~ slavery and indentured servitude in any form are prohibited.

Vermont Proposal 2, Prohibit Slavery and Indentured Servitude Amendment (2022)

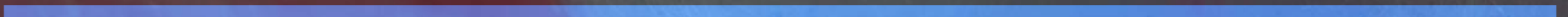
A "yes" vote supported amending the state constitution to repeal language stating that persons could be held as servants, slaves, or apprentices with the person's consent or "for the payments of debts, damages, fines, costs, or the like" and add "slavery and indentured servitude in any form are prohibited."

88.71% of Vermonters voted
in support of Prop 2.

As a reminder ...

Wages paid to incarcerated Vermonters
range

from \$0.25 per hour to \$1.25 per hour



- Indentured servitude: is a system where people are forced to work for a specific period to pay off a debt or obligation, often involving a contract.
 - Prison labor: is a form of forced labor where inmates are compelled to work, often for minimal or no pay, as part of their sentence or as a means of maintaining the prison system.
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Additionally ...

The Vermont DOC contracts with The Keefe Group to provide commissary services and Global Tel Link Corporation to provide telecommunication services.

Each contract provides significant profit margins that exploit incarcerated Vermonters and their families.

Key Aspects of H. 294

Fair Pay for Labor:

The bill mandates that incarcerated individuals be compensated at a rate equal to or greater than the federal minimum wage for their labor. This provision ensures that offenders receive fair remuneration, aligning their compensation with standard labor practices outside correctional facilities. The Commissioner is tasked with establishing written guidelines governing the hours, conditions, and rates of compensation for offender work. Wage payments to offenders are to be set aside in a separate fund that:

1. Contributes to a Victim's Restitution Fund
 2. Is saved for release date or to provide for dependents.
 3. May be used for immediate commissary purchases.
-

Key Aspects of H. 294

Commissary Provisions:

The bill stipulates that any contract to provide commissary services in state correctional facilities must ensure that prices do not exceed the fair market value of comparable products sold in the community where the facility is located by more than 10 percent. This measure aims to prevent price gouging and ensure that incarcerated individuals have access to goods at reasonable prices.

Key Aspects of H. 294

Telecommunication Provisions:

The bill requires that upon admission to a correctional facility, inmates be allowed access to a telephone for outgoing calls at no expense. Any contracts for providing telephone or other communication services to inmates must be negotiated to ensure no cost to inmates, their families, or others communicating with them. Furthermore, the Department may supplement telephone use with other communication services, including video and electronic communication services, provided these are offered at no expense to the inmate.

Key Aspects of H. 294

Report:

On or before January 1, 2026, the Department of Corrections shall evaluate its contracts with Global Tel Link Corporation and the Keefe Group and report to the General Assembly on whether:

- (1) each vendor offers its services or products to incarcerated individuals at prices substantially higher than applicable to comparable services or products offered in the community where the facility is located; and
 - (2) each vendor offers its services or products to incarcerated individuals at prices substantially higher than offered by competing vendors.
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Ending Profit on Prisoners Altogether:

Key Aspects of H. 191

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By enacting H.191, Vermont aims to prioritize the well-being and rehabilitation of incarcerated individuals over the financial interests of private entities, enhance the effectiveness of its correctional system, and address the challenges associated with out-of-state incarceration.

Key Aspects of H. 191

While the bill allows for the assignment and transfer of incarcerated individuals to out-of-state facilities operated by public or nonprofit entities, it emphasizes the intent to repatriate individuals housed out of state back to Vermont. In order to:

facilitate better oversight,
access to legal counsel, and
family visitation.

which are often hindered when individuals are incarcerated far from their home state.

Key Aspects of H. 191

The Department of Corrections is tasked with creating a comprehensive plan to bring back incarcerated individuals currently housed in out-of-state facilities. The goal is to complete this repatriation process by 2034, reflecting the General Assembly's intent to eliminate the practice of housing Vermont inmates in privately operated, for-profit, or out-of-state correctional facilities within a decade.

Thank you.

Let's continue the conversation.
