

THE COURAGE TO HOPE

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



#SECONDLOOKMI



TERRANCE REYES

#266510
CONVICTED AT 18
23 YEARS SERVED

MICHIGAN'S SECRET
DEATH ROW

#SECONDLOOKMI



TYRONE REYES

#266511
CONVICTED AT 16
23 YEARS SERVED

MICHIGAN'S SECRET
DEATH ROW



**THE
SENTENCING
PROJECT**

RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY FOR REFORM

“THE LACK OF HOPE IS THE HARDEST PART ABOUT LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE.

But The Sentencing Project’s efforts have inspired me to dare to hope, to dare to believe that someday there will be an opportunity for me to give back to my community and make a positive impact.

Thanks to The Sentencing Project’s effort, I have the courage to hope.”

FAROOQ QUINLAN

CO-FOUNDER, DROP LWOP NEW ENGLAND



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MISSION

The Sentencing Project advocates for effective and humane responses to crime that minimize imprisonment and criminalization of youth and adults by promoting racial, ethnic, economic, and gender justice.



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This past year tested the resiliency of us all: people's health, livelihoods, and communities suffered, and the nation itself continued to struggle with deep political polarization, violence, and pervasive racial injustice. At the same time, resilience, creativity, and community bonds flourished in the face of adversity as many met the moment by joining together to forge ahead in new and more positive ways.

At The Sentencing Project, we met this moment by growing our capacity and sharpening our focus on our goals and the challenges ahead. By any measure, we had a remarkable year. We nearly doubled our staff, tripled our research publications, and expanded our impact by working with partners in 29 states. Our new capacity translated into expanded partnerships that intensified our advocacy on the ground and investments in local coalitions to advance reform.

We grew our advocacy staff to include organizers, fellows, and policy experts dedicated to rolling back extreme sentencing, expanding voting rights, and ensuring that youth are not transferred into the adult criminal legal system. Not only did the impact of our programs expand in 2021, we also invested in our long-term infrastructure to ensure sustainable, smart growth by enhancing our operations and development capacity.

Three of our new advocacy staff are formerly incarcerated and bring their personal experiences of facing extreme sentences and suffering disenfranchisement due to a felony conviction to their work for social change. Their leadership informs all aspects of our work at The Sentencing Project.

Finally, we know that racism instigated and perpetuated this country's nearly 50-year-old experiment in mass incarceration; confronting racial injustice remains an intrinsic part of our work.

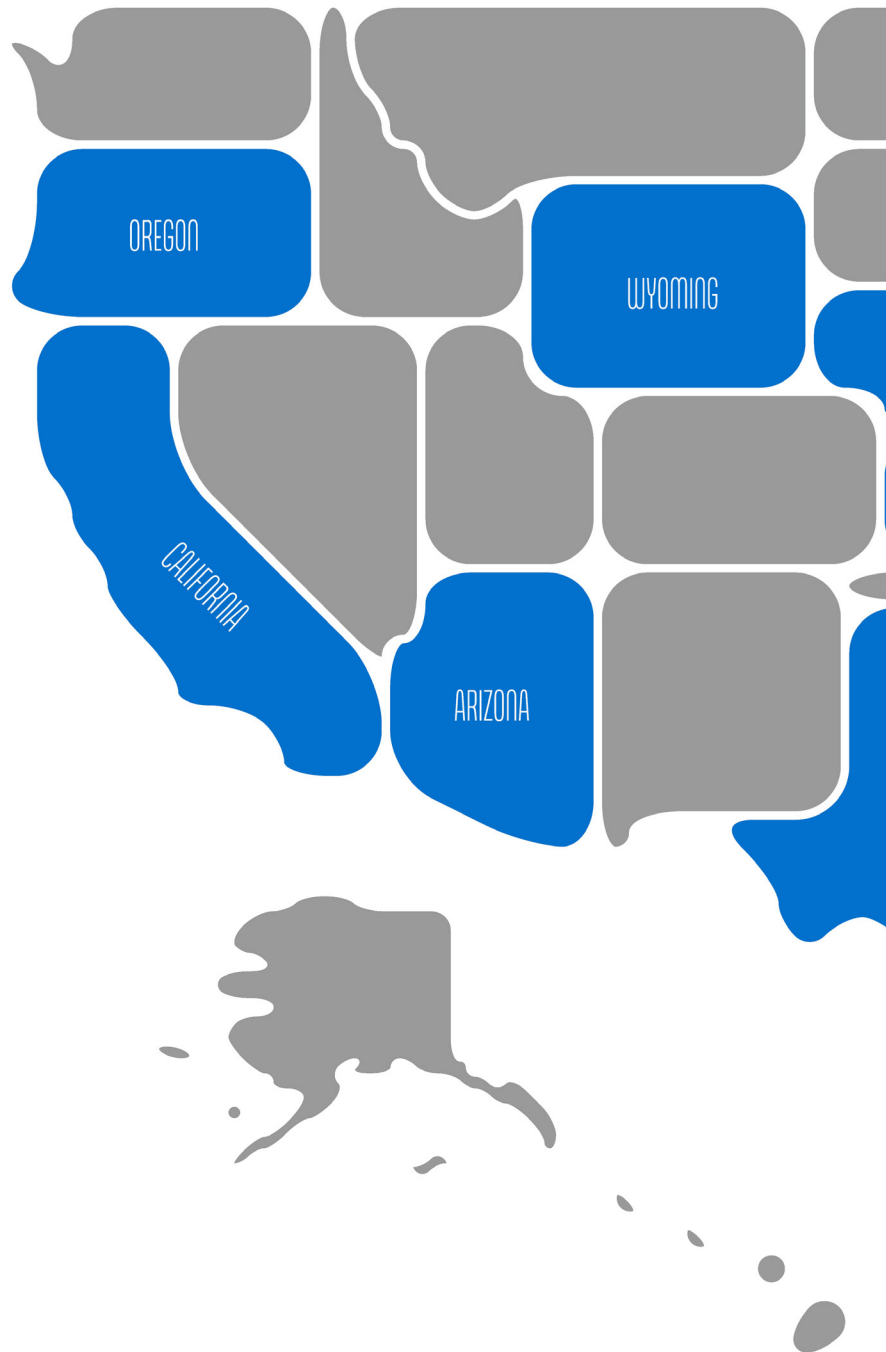
Our goals are bold and so is our vision. The times, our supporters, and our partners need and deserve nothing less.

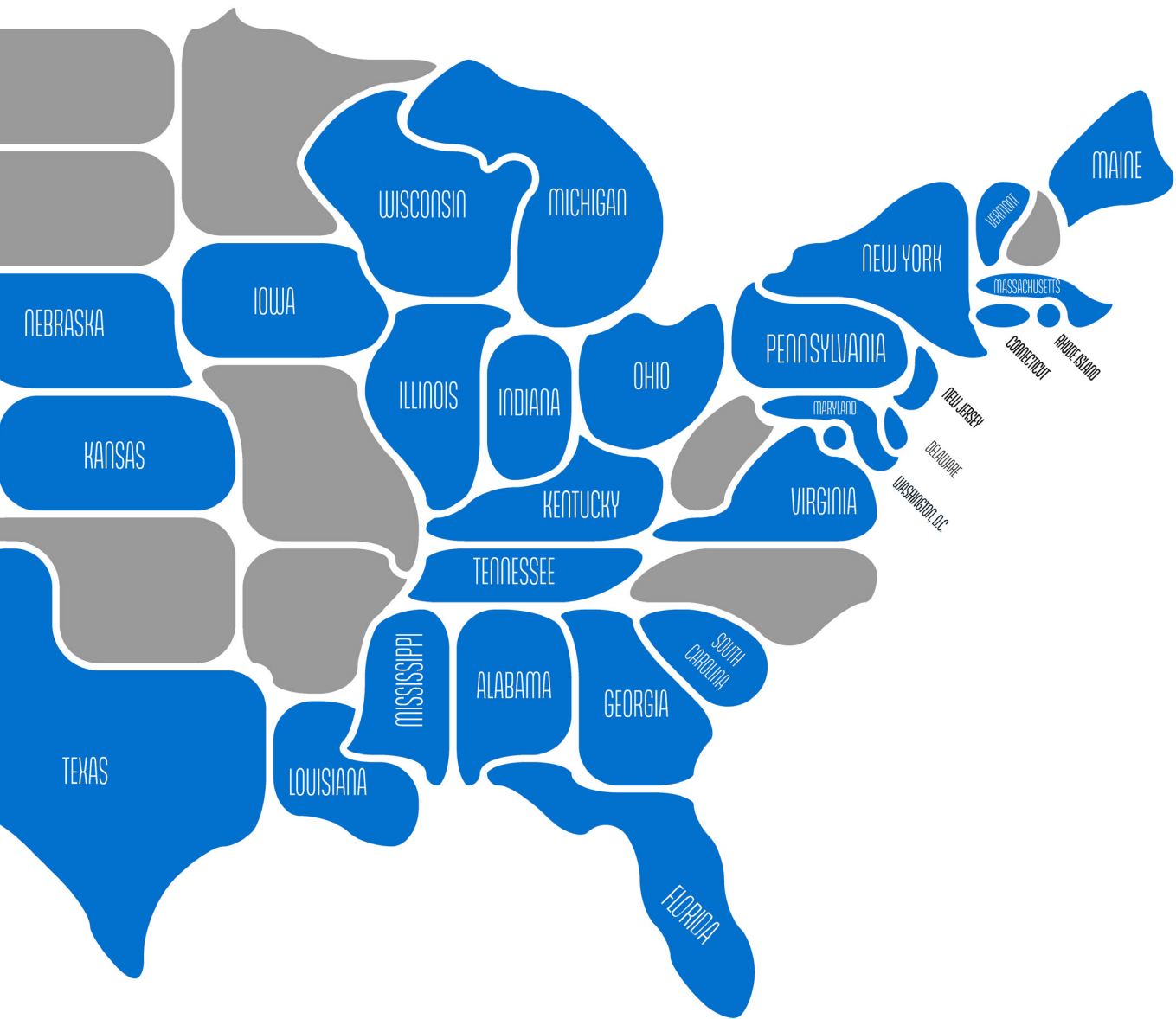
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amy Fettig". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Amy Fettig
Executive Director

WHERE WE WORK

TSP brings unique value as a bridge organization, uniting work on the ground with overarching policy changes at the national level. We currently partner with 68 national groups and over 150 state-level organizations who are working with us to advance extreme sentencing, voting rights, and youth justice reforms. In all of these partnerships, we are committed to centering the voices, experiences, and leadership of directly impacted individuals and communities, and we use their direction to inform and tailor our support strategies for each collaboration.





OUR POLICY PRIORITIES



RACIAL JUSTICE

Ending both mass incarceration and the injustice of our current criminal legal system cannot be achieved without addressing the rampant racism that supports it. As we work to expand our impact, we are guided by a strategic focus on racial justice and a commitment to amplifying the work, voices, and leadership of directly impacted individuals, families, and communities.



EXTREME SENTENCING

Excessively punitive sentencing policies that ignore an individual's potential for transformation are cruel and ineffective approaches to crime prevention. Criminological research on recidivism among people serving long sentences informs our policy recommendations to end life imprisonment and cap sentences at 20 years.

OUR POLICY PRIORITIES

VOTING RIGHTS

Nearly 5.2 million Americans remain unable to vote due to a felony conviction. The racial disparities that pervade the criminal legal system translate into a devastating loss of political power for Black and Brown communities. We are working to protect our democracy by expanding the vote to all Americans, regardless of their interaction with the criminal legal system.



YOUTH JUSTICE

An estimated 53,000 youth are tried, sentenced, or incarcerated as adults each year. Youth of color make up more than 80% of young people charged as if they were adults. We are working to keep youth out of the adult system and ensure that responses to adolescent misbehavior are restorative rather than harmful.



2021 AT A GLANCE

A YEAR OF EXPONENTIAL GROWTH

EXPANDING OUR IMPACT

Building increased capacity for wide-reaching research and advocacy



staff hired



new
publications



states
supported
with direct
campaign
assistance

IN THE NEWS

Changing the way Americans think about crime and punishment

79

public talks and presentations given by our staff

950

mentions in national, state, and local media

4,140

webinar registrants

1,032,797

website visitors

ADVANCING RACIAL JUSTICE



Meaningful reforms to the criminal legal system cannot be accomplished without acknowledgement of its racist underpinnings.

The Sentencing Project is committed to profiling the causes and consequences of racial disparities in order to eliminate them. In 2021, we updated our seminal Color of Justice report, documenting the rates of incarceration for white, Black, and Latinx Americans in each state, identifying three contributors to racial and ethnic disparities in imprisonment, and providing recommendations for reform. One of our most influential reports of the year, it served as the vanguard for wide outreach including a research town hall, panel presentation, op-ed, webinar, lobby days, and movement for more states to adopt racial impact statements.

And they responded! Lawmakers in Maine, Maryland, and Virginia passed policies to incorporate racial impact statements, which are a powerful tool to evaluate and avoid potential disparities in the criminal legal system before legislation is adopted.

ENDING EXTREME SENTENCES

Our Campaign to End Life Imprisonment is providing increased support to directly impacted state partners fighting for a second look.

In 2021, we published several reports detailing the particular harm of extreme sentences on women, chronicling the historically low rates of recidivism among people serving long sentences, and identifying policy trends and opportunities across the country to reconsider long sentences. This research played a critical role in our campaign to promote second look reform in Michigan, where our data analysis found that 40% of the state's prison population was convicted under the age of 26.

Taking our lead from people serving life sentences in Michigan, our staff worked to mobilize over 72 local advocacy groups to promote second look legislation that would reduce Michigan's prison population and give thousands a second chance. We crafted a persuasive public education and communications strategy that included coordinated community meetings, a highly publicized public rally, and numerous op-eds from people serving life sentences that illustrate the urgent need for sentencing reform. Our efforts successfully garnered the attention and support of key state policymakers, who pledged to support our proposed legislation in an upcoming session.



“For the League of Women Voters of Kentucky to effectively advocate for restoration of voting rights public policy changes in our Commonwealth, we need the professional, value-centered help of The Sentencing Project. TSP connects us with colleagues in other states and leverages its national relationships to help our struggle in Kentucky. Most importantly TSP gives us a national perspective and fosters realistic hope in our shared efforts to help our sisters and brothers fully participate in our democracy.”

League of Women Voters of Kentucky
Civil Rights Restoration Committee

RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS

EXPANDING VOTING RIGHTS

Our nationwide coalitions are working to ensure all Americans have access to the ballot.

With our expanded capacity, we established new nationwide coalitions to build momentum for voting rights restoration and in-jail voting. Local advocacy efforts were bolstered by our new research that identified the astounding number of citizens disenfranchised in target jurisdictions, including Minnesota, Georgia, Texas, and Connecticut.

We played a critical role in voting rights expansion efforts in ten states, including Connecticut and New York, which both passed new legislation to restore voting rights to residents on parole, enfranchising nearly 40,000 people. As part of our efforts supporting these changes, we provided advocates with state-specific reports, submitted testimony, wrote and placed op-eds, and funded civic education on voting rights.

In Texas, we helped implement a new polling location in the Harris County jail. In partnership with a coalition of state advocates, we worked with local election administrators, county commissioners, and the sheriff’s office to coordinate logistics, recruit volunteers, and educate the public. These efforts provided voter information and ballot access to nearly 9,000 county jail residents.



“The support of The Sentencing Project has been integral in informing our community of the racial disparities that exist in Iowa. Their research added credibility to local organizers’ approaches and forced the community to shift its focus from detention toward the bigger picture—racial inequity. The Sentencing Project’s data caused our community and our state to take a subjective look at ourselves to determine why Iowa is a leader in disproportionality in youth detention.”

LaDrina Wilson
Iowa Organizer and
Youth Justice Advocate

RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHT

PROMOTING YOUTH JUSTICE



Our research is helping to shrink racial disparities across the youth justice system.

While statistics show that rates of youth incarceration have dropped precipitously over the past decade, racial disparities continue to pervade the youth justice system. To identify and eliminate the drivers of these disparities, we released new publications designed to provide state and local advocates with tools needed to advance systemic change. As students returned to school after a year of remote learning, our research and advocacy played an especially important role in illustrating how to close the school-to-prison pipeline through increased community support and diversion services.

For example, in Scott County, Iowa, legislators were proposing to use nearly one-third of their federal COVID relief funds to expand a local youth detention facility, despite evidence that it would worsen racial disparities and outcomes for youth across the state. Our advocacy team worked with the local community to build awareness of the issue, arranging meetings, town halls, and a county-wide public education campaign. As a result, Iowa lawmakers introduced new legislation aimed at promoting diversion, rather than detention, for youth in the adult and youth justice systems.

RACIAL JUSTICE FUND

“No one organization can end mass incarceration on its own. The Sentencing Project’s Racial Justice Fund helps grow the capacity of our partners to advance solutions that challenge mass incarceration. Together, we are building unified momentum for change where it is most needed across the country.”

Nicole Porter
Senior Director of Advocacy

We’re partnering with grassroots allies to increase the momentum and impact of the movement for reform.

In response to the murder of George Floyd, The Sentencing Project established a Racial Justice Fund (RJF) to support our state advocacy partners. In 2021, we piloted the fund with 11 micro-grants to grassroots organizations across ten states. The grants supported a wide range of projects, including campaign planning, report writing, directly impacted leadership, video production, and communications outreach.

Many RJF grantees are small organizations led by directly impacted advocates. These targeted grants provide our partners with the support needed to build their capacity and increase the scope of their impact.

We are already seeing tangible results. One state partner, Nation Outside, used its RJF funding to conduct a statewide survey of county jail voting policies in Michigan and support voter education in Genesee County. Another state partner, Alabama CURE, used RJF funds to support media development, coalition building, and collaboration with directly impacted activists. These activities have helped to build awareness and public support for elder parole policies in advance of the 2022 legislative session.



OUR TEAM

TSP STAFF

Amy Fettig
Executive Director

Warren Allen
End Life Imprisonment Fellow

Alexandra Bailey
End Life Imprisonment Strategist

Breanna Bishop
Communications Associate

Durrell Douglas
Jail-based Voting Initiative Organizer

Nazgol Ghandnoosh, Ph.D.
Senior Research Analyst

Kara Gotsch
Deputy Director

R. Elysa Gurman
Executive Assistant

Keeda Haynes
State Campaign Strategist

Heather Koslov
Development Director

Florence Lee
Development Associate

Marc Mauer
Senior Advisor

Morgan McLeod
Communications Manager

Richard Mendel
Senior Research Fellow

Marcy Mistrett
Director of Youth Justice

Ashley Nellis Ph.D.
Senior Research Analyst

Terry Nixon
Director of Operations & Finance

Nicole Porter
Senior Director of Advocacy

Joshua Rovner
Senior Advocacy Associate

William "Bill" Underwood
Senior Fellow

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We Got Us Now

THANK YOU 2021 SUPPORTERS

The Sentencing Project's work is made possible through the commitment and generosity of our community. Thank you for standing with us in our fight for a more fair and effective criminal legal system.

This listing includes all supporters who gave contributions of \$1,000 or more in 2021.

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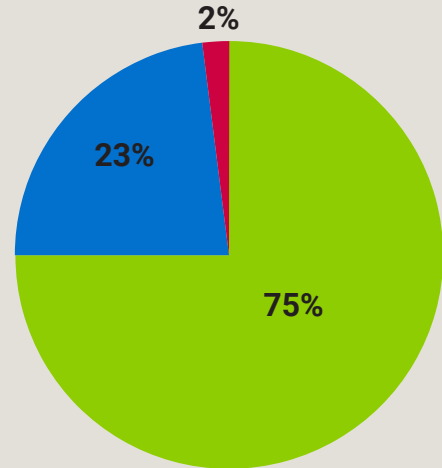
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Dyana Zweng

2021 REVENUE AND EXPENSES

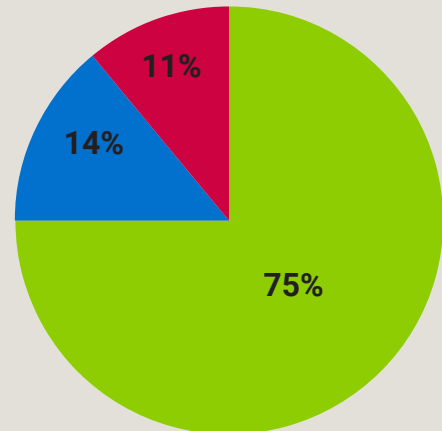
REVENUE

■ Foundations	\$ 3,938,264
■ Individuals	\$ 1,228,294
■ Other	\$ 106,856
TOTAL	\$ 5,273,414



EXPENSES

■ Program Services	\$ 2,125,269
■ Fundraising	\$ 397,265
■ Management and general	\$ 312,819
TOTAL	\$ 2,835,353



THE COURAGE TO HOPE



TOGETHER, WE STAND FOR RACIAL JUSTICE AND AN END TO MASS INCARCERATION.

Here are a few ways you can contribute to this important work:

LEARN more about the issues, key criminal justice facts, and our recommendations for reform on our website, www.sentencingproject.org.

FOLLOW us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to stay up to date on our latest news, publications, and events.

SHARE your support for our policy priorities with your friends, family, networks, and local legislators—your voice is essential to making change happen!

DONATE to make another year of our impactful research and advocacy possible. The Sentencing Project is almost entirely funded by charitable contributions, and our work is only achieved with your support.



RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY FOR REFORM

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