

The following information was assembled by the Youth Justice Coalition (YJC). YJC is working to build a youth, family, and formerly and currently incarcerated people's movement to challenge America's addiction to incarceration and race, gender and class discrimination in Los Angeles County's, California's and the nation's juvenile and criminal justice systems.

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*To all our friends and family inside California's juvenile halls, jails and prisons:*

We are writing to you to urge that you work with us to pass Proposition 57. California voters will get a chance to pass this law when they vote this November.

*We are hoping that you will:*

1. Educate everyone you know about the importance of Prop 57 and how to pass it.
2. Get all your people to register and then go to the polls on Election Day – November 8th.

### **WHY PEOPLE SHOULD VOTE YES ON PROP 57?**

California is still #1 worldwide in prison spending. Our addiction to punishment and incarceration has bankrupted local communities' abilities to provide the essential resources needed to prevent crime and violence – quality schools, parks and playgrounds, jobs, affordable housing, health and mental health care and drug treatment. Throughout the state, Californians are demanding a new vision for public safety – (1) One that protects youth from harsh and unnecessary transfers into adult court; (2) That prevents the high human and financial costs of extreme court sentences; (3) That provides support for people inside prison to better prepare to come home ready to reintegrate back into families and communities; (4) That defines people by our potential to contribute – not just by our worst act; and (5) That saves millions in prison spending, ultimately providing additional funds for essential community resources and opportunities.



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### **Proposition 57:**

- **Ends the power of District Attorneys (Prosecutors) to transfer youth as young as 14 into Adult Court without a hearing before a juvenile court judge.** Prop 57 ensures that every youth who faces transfer to adult court first has a transfer hearing in juvenile court, and also makes transfer hearings fairer by presuming that youth should remain in juvenile court unless the prosecutor can prove otherwise. Prop 57 further requires that judges carefully review all of the circumstances of the youth's life, the alleged crime, and the impact of their age and maturity on their actions.
- **Permits parole consideration for people who are incarcerated in state prison with a nonviolent conviction.** Prop 57 makes people eligible for parole consideration if they (1) Are convicted of a "nonviolent" offense, and (2) If they have served the full sentence for their primary offense. Prop 57 allows people with "nonviolent" convictions to earn parole earlier than before in order to increase fairness in sentencing, reduce wasteful spending, and support people to become productive members of their families and communities. We understand that language around "non-violent" is both inaccurate and unfair. It's wasn't our intention to exclude people. But Prop 57 got a lot of opposition from DA's and law enforcement, so we weren't able to get

everything we wanted. We will continue to fight for changes in the law until everyone has a meaningful opportunity to come home.

- **Provides CDCR the authority to award credits.** CDCR will be able to decide how much and to who to award credits for “good behavior and approved rehabilitative or educational achievements”.

### **ADDITIONAL ARGUMENTS YOU CAN USE TO PASS PROP 57:**

Over the last several decades, California:

- Passed 1,000 crime bills and increased incarceration rates by more than 500%. California’s jail and prison populations grew from 26,000 to nearly 175,000 by 2010, despite historic drops in crime – now at their lowest levels since the 1950s.
- To accommodate harsher sentencing laws, California built 22 prisons between 1980 and 2015 – but only 1 tiny UC and 3 small California State Universities. Our state went from #1 nationally in education spending to #1 in prison spending, and as low as #47 in K-12 spending and #51 in funding for higher education.
- California now spends \$10 billion each year on state prisons, and local counties spend billions more on jails, juvenile halls and Probation camps.
- People of color have been treated *more harshly* FOR THE SAME BEHAVIORS as Whites, at every level of the system from police stops, arrests, and referrals to court, to rates and length of detention and incarceration, and transfer to the federal government for deportation. Black adults are nearly seven times as likely as White adults to be incarcerated and Latino adults are twice as likely.
- In addition, our bloated prison system has not focused on rehabilitation or incentivizing people to better themselves while incarcerated. In fact, as the prison system has grown, education, jobs, mental health and treatment programs inside have been eliminated.



By investing in rehabilitation, **Prop 57 improves public safety;** reduces unfair practices and racial bias in the system; helps stop the cycle of crime, violence and re-incarceration; and reduces wasteful spending on prisons.

### **EDUCATE YOUR COMMUNITY – INSIDE AND OUT**

**EDUCATE YOUR INSTITUTION AND ALL THE CONNECTED FAMILIES ABOUT PROP 57** and then ask them to make presentations at their local churches, synagogues, mosques and temples; pass out materials at their job and school; outreach to people at court, on the jail and prison visiting lines, in parks, etc.; and attend or organize community events. Everywhere they go, they can both register people to vote and hook them up with Yes on 57 materials.

Start a **YES ON PROP 57** team to lead the effort in your institution and ask your people to start similar teams on the outside.

**YES ON PROP 57 FACEBOOK PAGE:** For [more information](#) on Prop 57; to see a calendar of events; to get support in creating your own Yes on 57 actions; to schedule a presentation; to get materials; and to get updates on the campaign.

## **GET OUT THE VOTE**

People can go to the [Facebook Page](#) to connect with the Get Out the Vote effort in their area, as well as to get more information and materials. People are needed to go door-to-door and make calls in the weeks leading up to the election and on Election Day.

Election Day is Tuesday, November 8th.

### **GET OUT THE VOTE INSIDE JAILS AND PRISONS, ON PROBATION AND AMONG PEOPLE WHO ARE HOME**

#### **PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO REGISTER AND VOTE IF:**

- They are or will be 18 on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
- They were born in the U.S. or are a naturalized citizen.
- They have NOT been found by a court to be "mentally incompetent."
- They CAN vote if they are currently detained in a juvenile hall or county jail going back and forth to trial.
- They CAN vote if they are currently incarcerated on misdemeanor charges in a County Jail, state prison, Probation camp or ranch or any other lock-up. (Legal Services for Prisoners with Children are also working to expand rights to people serving time in county jail on a felony - especially impactful given all the people serving AB109 sentences.)
- They CAN vote if they have been convicted in the past, as long as they have completed Parole.
- They CAN vote if they are on Probation.



Get [more information](#) on the rights of people who are or have been incarcerated and learn more about [voter's rights](#).

### **MAKE SURE THAT ALL YOUR PEOPLE ARE REGISTERED TO VOTE.**

#### **The last day to register for the fall election is October 24th.**

Anyone distributing voter registration cards in California can become familiar with the [rules and regulations](#).

To request 50 or more voter registration cards from the Secretary of State, complete and submit a [Statement of Distribution Form](#) and a plan of distribution to the Secretary of State via mail or fax to: California Secretary of State, Elections Division, 1500 11th Street, 5th Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814 / Fax: (916) 653-3214

The Secretary of State's Elections Division is supposed to process the request within 48 hours of receiving the form. For additional assistance, contact the Secretary of State's Elections Division at (916) 657-2166.

#### **PEOPLE CAN ALSO REGISTER ONLINE TO SPEED UP THE PROCESS:**

Click [here](#) to access the online application.

People need to [re-register](#) to vote when:

- They move to a new permanent residence,
- They change their name, or
- They change their political party choice.

To find out if someone is currently registered to vote, click [here](#).

If the person is enrolled in California's confidential address program (for people who are in a secret and/or secure location), please do not apply to register to vote using this site. Contact the Safe At Home program toll-free at (877) 322-5227 or by [email](#).

To get trained in voter registration or if you have any questions, visit <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/frequently-asked-questions/> or contact the Secretary of State's Elections Division at (800) 345-8683 or by [email](#).

### **VOTE EARLY:**

#### **People can vote by mail.**

The last day to request a Vote-By-Mail Ballot is November 1, 2016.

- Return Vote-by-Mail Ballots with a postmark no later than November 8, 2016.
- Last Day for state to receive a Vote-By-Mail Ballot postmarked on or before November 8: November 11, 2016
- For people who are eligible to vote, but are outside the country - including US citizens who are members of the uniformed services (on active duty) and their family members, members of the Merchant Marines and their family members, commissioned corps of the Public Health Service, commissioned corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or US citizens living outside the United States - apply to register to vote, receive your elections materials, and vote, through a special absentee ballot by filling out the [Federal Post Card Application](#) (FPCA).

**IF WE WORK TOGETHER TO **PASS PROP 57** WE CAN BRING PEOPLE HOME EARLIER AND BUILD A SAFER, FAIRER, HEALTHIER AND HAPPIER STATE FOR EVERYONE.**