

Updates on Initiate Justice's 2019 Legislation

Assembly Constitutional Amendment 6 (McCarty - "Free the Vote Act")

would restore voting rights to people on parole in California. This will require passing a constitutional amendment as well as an Assembly Bill to put voting rights on the ballot in 2020. Nearly 50,000 people on parole in California are working, paying taxes, and positively contributing to their communities, yet they are unable to vote and have a say in policies that impact their lives. Voting rights are key to building our power. Voting rights are key for us to be able to change the system for everyone.

In addition to ACA 6, we must also pass a regular Assembly Bill to clean up the Elections Code language. This bill is AB 646 and it is being held in committee until ACA 6 moves forward.

STATUS: ACA 6 will be heard in the Assembly Elections Committee on June 19. Then, it will move to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, then the Assembly Floor. If it passes the Assembly, it then has to go through the same committees in the Senate and the Senate Floor. We need a 2/3 vote to pass this, which is a huge challenge, so PLEASE send your letters of support ASAP!

If it passes the Legislature, a majority of voters will have to vote to pass it in the 2020 election. This is a long-term fight, so stay involved and help how you can!

Assembly Bill 965 (Stone - Youth Offender Parole Credit-Earning)

would allow people to earn credits from their Youth Offender Parole Hearing Date if it is sooner than their original parole date. Under Prop 57, credit-earning opportunities were expanded for most people in prison, but these credits are currently not applied to the earliest possible parole hearing dates for people eligible for Youth Offender Parole. AB 965 will make it so all of these credits are applied to the true earliest possible parole date, including YOPD's.

Unfortunately, AB 965 was amended in the Appropriations Committee to no longer include Elderly Parole. The staff members on that committee felt that the bill would not pass unless that amendment was made. We are very disappointed but committed to keeping up the effort.

STATUS: After a painstaking effort, AB 965 PASSED the Assembly Floor on 5/24/19! It will be heard in the Senate Public Safety Committee on June 25. Then, it must pass the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senate Floor, and then must be signed by Governor Newsom.

Assembly Bill 45 (Stone - Medical Co-Pays)

would permanently eliminate medical and dental copayments for people inside of California prisons and jails. Effective March 1, 2019, CDCR announced they will stop charging the \$5 copay, which is a huge victory and a response to the pressure advocates applied, but we still need to pass AB 45 to make it law (so CDCR can't start charging again in the future), and end the copays in all of California's county jails as well.

STATUS: AB 45 PASSED the Assembly Floor on 5/23/19! It will be heard in the Senate Public Safety Committee on June 25. Then, it must pass the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senate Floor, and then must be signed by Governor Newsom.

Please keep the support letters for all three of these bills coming. We have received a few hundred so far, but our goal is to reach a few thousand and flood the Capitol with your voices!

Assembly Bill 277 (McCarty - Parole Credit-Earning)

would create a credit-earning system for people on parole, similar to Proposition 57, for successfully completing educational programs, vocational programs, participating in non-court order substance use treatment, and performing community service.

STATUS: Failed. Unfortunately, AB 277 failed to pass the Assembly Appropriations Committee. We are working with the author and co-sponsors to find a way to bring it back up this year, but in the meantime, we no longer need to get letters of support for this bill. We will continue to keep our members posted on its status.



Initiate Justice staff, members, and volunteers in Sacramento advocating for ACA 6 on 4/29/19.



Former IJ Inside Organizer, Richard, testifying in favor of AB 965 in the Assembly Public Safety Committee.



Initiate Justice members & staff meeting with Assemblymember Stone, the author of AB 45 & AB 965.



Initiate Justice members Antoinette & Margo advocating for all of our bills in the Capitol on 5/13/19.

Help us get these bills passed!

Getting letters of support for our bills is absolutely crucial to getting them passed. Every time a bill goes to a different committee, the committee staff report how many letters of support have been received to the legislators who are about to vote on that bill. The more support letters we have, the better chance we have that the bills will get passed.

When Initiate Justice does our legislative visits in the Capitol, our members have the chance to share their stories about how the bills can impact them and their incarcerated loved ones. For the folks who are currently incarcerated and cannot physically be at the Capitol, letters of support are the best way to have your voice heard.

Take the time to let the Legislature know how this bill will impact you. Share about who you are, the positive things you are doing, and what you hope to accomplish. Legislators need to hear from folks inside so they can truly understand the impact that their vote can have.

Enclosed are template letters of support for ACA 6, AB 45, and AB 965. **Please use the templates and mail your letters back to our South SF address ASAP!** We will pass the letters on to the Assembly and Senate.



"This program is called "The Institute of Impacted Leaders", and our participants have been working hard to get our bills passed."



"In April, Initiate Justice launched a 12-week organizing training program for people impacted by incarceration...."

THE CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS: HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW

As we talk about the legislation we are working on, you may have questions about how the process works. Here is a step-by-step guide on how a bill becomes a law in the State of California, to help frame what this work looks like and why it's important to get involved:

1 IDEA - an individual or organization contacts a state Assemblymember or Senator and asks them to introduce their bill idea. Every bill needs an author. If the author is an Assemblymember, it will start in the Assembly. If the author is a Senator, it will start in the Senate.

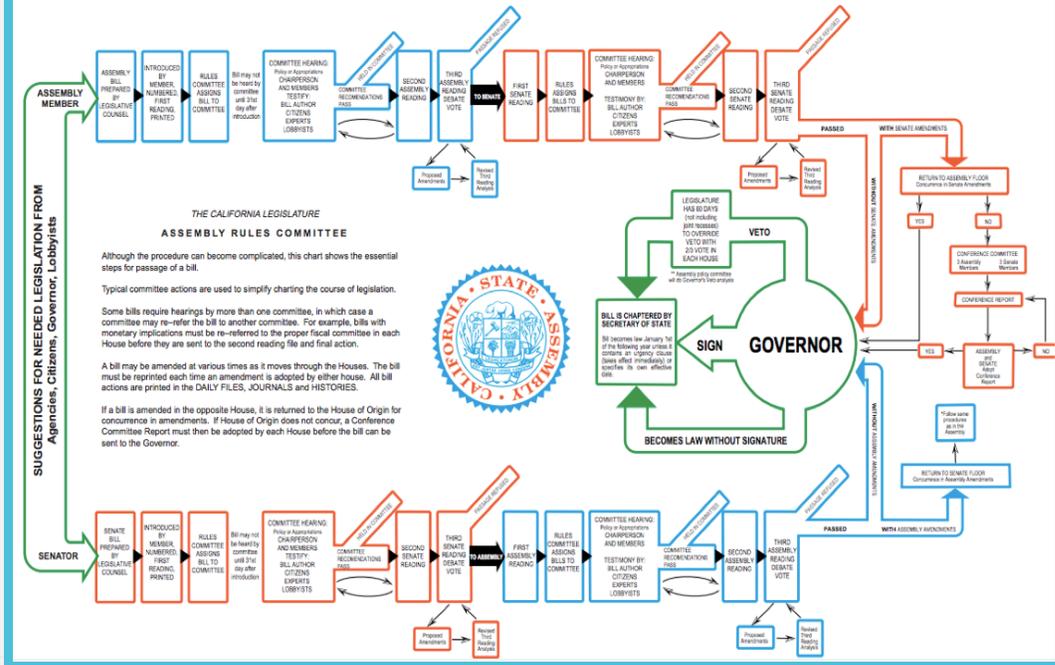
2 POLICY COMMITTEE - after the bill is introduced, it gets a bill number and is referred to a policy committee to be voted on. Bills that reform the prison system will always go through the Public Safety Committee.

3 FISCAL COMMITTEE - if the bill will cost money to implement (which most do), it has to go through the Appropriations Committee to be voted on.

4 FLOOR VOTE - if the bill passes both the Policy & Fiscal Committee, it will move to the Floor of its house of origin to be voted on by all of the members of that house. There are 80 Assemblymembers and 40 Senators.

5 POLICY COMMITTEE - if the bill passes the Floor of the first house, it must repeat the process in the second house. For example, if the bill passes the Assembly Floor, it will then move to the Senate and usually go through the same exact committees on the Senate side.

THE LIFE CYCLE OF LEGISLATION From Idea into Law



- 6 FISCAL COMMITTEE** - if the bill passes its policy committee, it has to go through the Appropriations Committee in the to be voted on.
- 7 FLOOR VOTE** - if the bill passes both the Policy & Fiscal Committee, it will move to the Floor of the second house to be voted on.
- 8 CONCURRENCE VOTE** - if the bill was amended in the second house, it will have to go back to the Floor of the house of origin for the amendments to be concurred in (approved).
- 9 GOVERNOR'S SIGNATURE** - after the bill passes both houses of the Legislature, the Governor has 30 days to sign or veto the bill. If they veto it, the bill dies. If they sign it or return it without a signature, it will go into effect Jan. 1 of the upcoming year.

YARD INTEGRATION

We do not have any updates on the yard integration campaign at this time. If you wish to file a complaint against the yard integration policy, ask your family to:

- Fill out a Citizens Complaint form, on cdcr.ca.gov,
- Contact their Assemblymember and State Senator, and
- Contact the Ombudsman assigned to the prison where you live.

Follow up with the Youth Justice Coalition directly with questions about the advocacy campaign:
 Youth Justice Coalition
 7625 S. Central Ave
 Los Angeles, CA 90001