



# Statewide Leadership Council

SYSTEM-IMPACTED LEADERS  
TRANSFORMING JUSTICE IN TEXAS

Sponsored by Texas Center for Justice & Equity

SPRING 2022

ISSUE 1



## What is the Statewide Leadership Council?

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The **Statewide Leadership Council** (SLC) is a group of Texans who are formerly incarcerated, on probation or parole, or family members of people in the prison system. We are committed to ending incarceration in this state.

Texas's INjustice system harms us, our families, and our communities. When legislators are making decisions about people impacted by the INjustice system, we deserve to be heard. We are claiming our right to be included — and to be leaders — during conversations and decisions about prison, probation, parole, and the need for supports to help us and our families live successfully.

The SLC is sponsored by the **Texas Center for Justice and Equity** (TCJE), which works statewide at the Texas legislature and in various counties to end mass incarceration and build safe, healthy Texas communities. SLC participants join monthly meetings where we provide advocacy training resources and build a community together.

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## Join us!

Visit: [www.TexasCJE.org/statewide-leadership-council](http://www.TexasCJE.org/statewide-leadership-council)

Contact: Maggie Luna,  
[MLuna@TexasCJE.org](mailto:MLuna@TexasCJE.org)

1714 Fortview Rd. Ste. 104  
Austin, TX 78704



## Creating Change Together

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We **invest in our future** by providing training in leadership, advocacy, and organizing to SLC participants.

We **build coalitions** by connecting participants and leaders through regular meetings.

We **raise our voices and fight for change** by working in our communities and advocating at the Texas Legislature.



## Our Policy Priorities

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Common Sense Parole  
TDCJ Emergency Planning  
Removing Barriers to Reentry

# A Message from Maggie

*Maggie Luna, Statewide Leadership Council Steering Committee Member*

After years of cycling in and out of jail and rehab, I ended up in prison twice and believed that was the end of the road. I had been on probation, parole, or incarcerated for 20 years of my life and I felt like I would never get out of this revolving door that is Texas' INjustice system.

I already experienced so much rejection from employers and I was denied the ability to rent a place to live in my own name because of my previous convictions. I was a mother of 3 and completely overtaken by my addiction. It was impossible to imagine any pathway to a stable home for my children. I felt like I was drowning and just fighting to keep my head above water.

In 2015, I lost everything and ended up back in prison in 2017. I had seen so many instances of racial disparity within the system and witnessed many inhumane conditions throughout this journey. I knew I was coming out with another felony, no job, and no home, so the chances of me doing something different seemed hopeless.

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# Continued: A Message From Maggie



While I was in this last time I really began to have so much compassion for the women I saw suffering with me. We were all feeling hopeless and just trying to survive one more day. I saw so many women without family, some elderly with medical conditions, and I genuinely feared they would not make it out alive. I remember the look on their faces as we suffered through the Texas heat without air conditioning and thinking that someone needed to know what was happening there.

Once I was released into society I felt like a feral animal being thrown into a world that had already deemed me as disposable. From there, I began on a long road of healing with some assistance from people who believed in me and empowered me until I was able to believe in myself. I was learning to use my voice and beginning to feel like I had purpose.

Today, I can stand in confidence and use every demeaning experience to illuminate the need to end mass incarceration.

The Texas Center for Justice and Equity afforded me this opportunity and I have been able to work on policies that affect people in the carceral system, like the many I left behind. My work with the Statewide Leadership Council is the most fulfilling work I have ever done in my entire life. This past legislative session was not easy but we had some wins and we have some members who now believe they can speak truth to power to impact change. This was the first time many of our members experienced a legislative hearing or provided testimony.

Our goal now is to train more directly impacted advocates across Texas to be able to use their voices to grow and become involved in their communities.

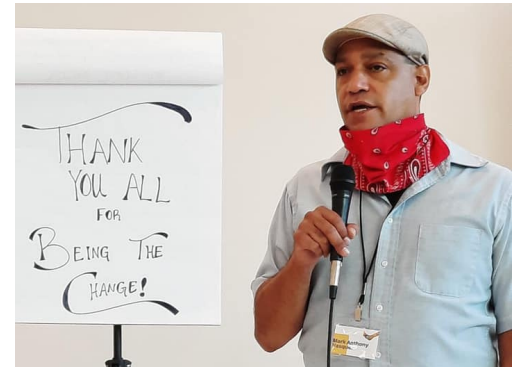
One little tiny seed of hope, someone believing in a person can change the entire trajectory of their life. I hope through the Statewide Leadership Council we continue to plant that seed for people just like it was done for me.



# Clean Slate Texas

Clean Slate Texas is a coalition of community and advocacy organizations (including the Texas Center for Justice and Equity), business and faith leaders, directly impacted people, and families dedicated to expanding access to record clearing so that people with previous involvement in the criminal legal system can get housing, employment, education, and more without facing a lifetime of discrimination.

Clean Slate Texas was active at the Texas legislature in 2021. We advocated for legislation that would expand eligibility for record clearing as well as streamline the process. We'll continue the fight for clean slate legislation when the legislature returns in 2023, and in the meantime, we are raising awareness about the burden and stigma that records create. To stay up to date with the work of Clean Slate Texas, sign up for [email updates here](https://www.cleanslatetexas.org/sign-up) (<https://www.cleanslatetexas.org/sign-up>), and follow them on [Twitter](#) (@CleanSlateTexas) and [Facebook](#) (facebook.com/CleanSlateTexas).



# Message from Mourning Our Losses

## **MOURNING OUR LOSSES IS SEEKING MEMORIALS, WRITING, AND ARTWORK**

**Mourning Our Losses** (MOL) was launched by a volunteer group of educators, artists, and organizers committed to the release of those incarcerated nationwide. Today, we continue to grow this platform for grief, healing, community, and reflection for all those affected by the death of a loved one due to poor conditions, medical negligence, violence, and mental health crises inside - the natural byproducts of mass incarceration.

We are a team driven by our own prison experiences. Our crowd-sourced memorial site and all that we do depends upon our ties to you, our siblings still inside. Our goal is to inform public, national conversations about the dangers of mass incarceration by sharing the stories of those lost. In doing this, we let the public know that we are all people – not numbers, criminals, or “inmates.” We do not use that type of dehumanizing language in the memorials we post. We do not speak negatively about anyone or talk about the crime for which they were convicted (at all!). No one deserves to suffer at the hands of the prison industry and NO ONE deserves to die inside.

**You can help us.** You may send us a memorial for a loved one who died, related creative writing, photos, and/or artwork (which we may not be able to return safely). When you send it in, be sure to include the name the person went by and your name as you would like it to appear on the memorial (or let us know if you'd like to remain anonymous). Let us know whether or not you give us permission to edit spelling errors, and whether we can contact you via electronic mail (JPay, Securus, GTL, etc.) to follow up.

### **Write to us at:**

Mourning Our Losses  
c/o Texas After Violence Project  
P.O. Box 15005  
Austin, TX 78761

We encourage you to share our website, **[mourningourlosses.org](http://mourningourlosses.org)**, with your friends and family on the outside. Memorials can be submitted on our website or via email at [mourningourlosses@gmail.com](mailto:mourningourlosses@gmail.com).

## **Are you interested in learning more about submitting your writing or artwork to Texas After Violence Project, a community-based archive?**

Send your name and address to Texas After Violence Project, P.O. Box 15005, Austin, TX 78761, or ask a loved one to email [info@texasafterviolence.org](mailto:info@texasafterviolence.org), to request a guide to our submission process and more information about our archive.