

December 2016

Dear Friends of Justice,

It has been an extremely productive and inspiring year for CJPC. Though there is always more to do, we have accomplished much; and we have sowed the seeds for much more to come. In these turbulent times, our resolve to push for more humane and compassionate criminal justice policies is stronger than ever. We know these are priorities for you too.

Many of us were stunned by the news we awoke to on November 9 that we are living in a new time. As we write this letter, Massachusetts Peace Action is holding a conference entitled “The Next Four Years: Building Our Movements in Dangerous Times.” The future for our country and, specifically, for criminal justice reform is unknown. While we hope for the best, we brace for the worst. It is in these times that organizations like CJPC are vital to make sure our priorities continue to be everyone’s priorities.

You have given to our coalition for two decades, for CJPC celebrated its 20-year anniversary in April. Since 1996, your support has made possible the programs described a bit later in this letter. For your past support, we are deeply grateful. Regarding your future support, we are hopeful that our ongoing programs and new projects will lead you to stretch a bit in your giving this year.

Here’s why:

**Criminal Justice Policy Coalition in 2016**

**20th Anniversary Gala**The Criminal Justice Policy Coalition (CJPC) marked its 20th anniversary on Tuesday, April 26, with an evening highlighting its campaign to eliminate life without parole sentences in Massachusetts, instead arguing for a maximum sentence that mandates parole review after 25 years of incarceration. Board member Nat Harrison presented highlights of the updated edition of Life Without Parole: A Reconsideration to the attendees.

**Life Without Parole**In 2010, Gordon Haas and Lloyd Fillion, in conjunction with the Criminal Justice Policy Coalition and the Norfolk Lifer’s Group, created a report that challenges the sentence of Life Without Parole, deeming it ineffective and in desperate need of reform. This year, we are thrilled to be releasing an updated second edition of the report. Our hope that [this new edition of “Life Without Parole: A Reconsideration”](http://www.cjpc.org/Life-Without-Parole-A-Reconsideration.pdf) will be useful for advocates around the state and across the nation as we push for change of such an antiquated sentence.

**Massachusetts Bail Fund**The [Massachusetts Bail Fund](http://www.massbailfund.org/) continues its invaluable work to challenge the cash bail system in Massachusetts. But as long as the system persists, it continues to help indigent defendants post nominal bails to assure they do not spend any time unnecessarily detained awaiting the resolution of their case. You can follow their progress at their website: www.massbailfund.org.

**Two-day Conference on Massachusetts and the Carceral State**The CJPC helped organize the first ever collaborative conference of criminal justice organizations in Massachusetts. We hope this is the first of many; and we hope they will continue to grow in substance and stature. This year’s theme was Massachusetts and the Carceral State. Jean Trounstine, activist, author, and Prof Emerita Middlesex Community College described our conference in glowing terms:

“The Massachusetts and the Carceral State Conference was a wonderful collaboration of members of the Criminal Justice Policy Coalition, Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice, Coalition for Effective Public Safety, and the Massachusetts branch of the National Lawyers Guild. We engaged more than 100 activists the first day, sponsored a dance performance on mass incarceration the first evening, which was well attended by many not usually at these events, and we engaged almost 250 enthused participants the second day in workshops and discussion. It was a step toward building a united front on criminal justice in Massachusetts and because of its success, we look forward to partnering with more organizations and continuing to develop more events in the future.”

**Sex Offender Reentry Grant**

CJPC is the recipient of a generous grant to fund a one-year project to study and implement best practices for helping persons convicted of sex offense reenter society. Sex offenders face numerous obstacles to successful reentry, many of which are unique to them. Thus, they require special consideration and targeted support. We hope to develop a concrete support network, reference list, and web of volunteers to tackle this issue.

**Additional coalition activities**CJPC continues to be part of several critical criminal justice coalitions: Jobs Not Jails, Juvenile Justice, Compassionate Release, and Sex Offender Reform Interest Group.

Additionally, we have continued to provide the community criminal justice calendar, a weekly update of all criminal justice activities in the state. Our calendar is unique; no other organization collects and disseminates this information. We are perpetually adding organizational activities and constantly lauded for this invaluable resource. Complimenting our calendar is our social media presence, which promotes important social media stories and events across the state.

**New Interim Executive Director**CJPC is very pleased to announce its new interim Executive Director Franklin Baxley. He began work for the Coalition on November 14, 2016, replacing former ED Rachel Corey. We know Franklin will keep us moving in the right direction while we plan for our future. For more about Franklin, you can read about him at our website.

Franklin can be reached at director@cjpc.org or 617-807-0111.

**Summary**At a time of great uncertainty, we know we can count on each other to make our communities and our world a better place.

We are stronger than ever, we are more focused, more resilient, more committed, and more successful than ever.

And it’s all thanks to you, our donors, our supporters. Thank you for believing in us, for encouraging us, and for supporting us.

Now join us, please, by making 2017 our best year ever!

Sincerely,

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Eric Tennen, President and Chair
CJPC Board of Directors

*Never give up*

*No matter what is happening*

*No matter what is going on around you*

*Never give up.*

*~ His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama*

The Criminal Justice Policy Coalition (CJPC) was created in 1996 in order to bring together those individuals and organizations concerned about the individual and societal repercussions of the increasingly retributive nature of criminal justice policy in Massachusetts. In 2002 the CJPC was incorporated and received its 501c3 status from the IRS. The CJPC is run by a ten-person board of directors. All work is done by the part-time executive director, volunteer board, working group volunteers, and interns.

The group aims to build support for rational, effective, and restorative criminal justice policies in Massachusetts by expanding the public discourse on criminal justice, promoting dialogue and co-operation among diverse stakeholders, and empowering groups and individuals committed to reversing our over-reliance on incarceration and punishment.