



Follow us on social media!



2026 Guest Editor: Professor Christian Bolden, Ph.D.

JustSouth Editor: Scotty Wolfe, B.S.

JSRI News

JustSouth Monthly Podcast: Considering Developmental Age in Justice Responses with Emerging Adults. Loyola rising senior Si Starks speaks with Dr. Victoria Riviera Laugalis about the [implications of emerging adults and their consideration, or lack thereof, within the criminal legal system](#). She explores emerging adulthood as a distinct stage of development, traces the history of the field, shares insights from her own research, and examines how the criminal legal system is beginning to respond to what we now know about young adults' development. [Listen here!](#)

Complaint of Illegal Denial of Public Access to Baton Rouge Immigration Court. Court watchers have been blocked from immigration hearings in Louisiana. 2024 Twomey Scholar Bill Quigley, J.D. wrote *Request for Public Access to Judicial Proceedings in the Baton Rouge Immigration Court* on behalf of Mision Migrante. [Read here!](#)

Profiting from Punishment: A \$445 Billion Industry – How Financial Incentives Fuel a Carceral State

By Meg Gonzalez

My first interaction with the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court was as a court observer, recording information about bail setting practices for the public defender's office. My first day was shocking. The sheer speed at which a judge: heard charges, heard the appeal of a prosecutor, then of a public defender, and using that information placed a monetary amount on someone's freedom - made my head spin. The price to get out of jail for some charges ranged from \$0 to \$200,000. If someone could not pay their bail, they would be held in the custody of the Orleans jail until the conclusion of their case. Another option, which many defendants without accessible cash choose, is to contract the services of a bail bonds agency.

I'll admit: in a pinch, bail bonds agencies can be helpful in the short term to front your bail sum to the court, when you as an individual pay only 10% to the bail bondsman. **On the other hand, bail bonds agencies profit off the repeated criminalization of poverty, and the fact that so many people arrested in New Orleans do not have the money to pay their bail outright.**



Bail Bonds agency across from Orleans Parish Criminal District Court. Photo taken by Meg Gonzales.

When someone is able to pay their full bail amount in cash, they get that sum returned to them if they show up for subsequent court hearings. Someone who pays a bail bondsman 10% of their total bail, however, is not reimbursed—even if they show up to court. The bail bondsman pockets the

Upcoming Events

In the Community:

Queer (In)Justice Summer Reading Group.

Join [Interrupting Criminalization](#) authors Joey Mogul, Andrea J. Ritchie, and Kay Whitlock for a virtual summer reading group exploring the book *Queer (In)Justice: The Criminalization of LGBTQ+ People in the United States*. Come to one or all three online sessions on Tuesday, June 30th, Thursday, July 30th, and Monday, August 31st at 6–8:00 P.M. [Register for free here](#).

The Dirty Coast Summer Get Together. Spend 4th of July with yard games, a presidential dunk booth, and a caricature artist, as well as voter registration, a recall petition, and congressional mailers. **Saturday, July 4th at 5 P.M. at the Broadside.** [Get \\$15 tickets here](#).

National Association of Community and Restorative Justice Conference. Join practitioners, advocates, educators, and community leaders for a gathering dedicated to advancing community and restorative justice. Speakers include Calvin Duncan, Dr. Marcus Kondkar, Sister Helen Prejean, and JSRI Advisory Board member Caroline Durham. **July 7th–10th in New Orleans.** [Register here](#).

Amistad Research Center: Vinyl Album Listening Party Fundraiser. Celebrate the soulful sounds of legendary male singing groups of the 70s and 80s. Join the Amistad Research Center for an elegant fundraising experience where friends, family, and music lovers come together for a night to remember. **Thursday, July 16th at 5:30–8:30 P.M. at The Blue Crawfish Hotel & Bar.** See the [flyer here](#); see the [Eventbrite](#)

Cash bail systems exploit poverty. Black people in New Orleans and across the country face the highest rates of both criminalization and poverty - a direct economic legacy of chattel slavery in the US. New Orleans was a crux of the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade. The legacy of forced immigration, forced labor, and exploitation prevails. Forced labor—slavery—is still legal in the United States under the 13th Amendment, which outlaws slavery except as punishment for crime. **The United States would not be as wealthy as it is without the continual exploitation of labor.**

The United States' prison industrial complex, the largest in the world, is a \$445 billion industry annually ⁽¹⁾. From policing to court fees, and construction to telecommunications - someone is turning a profit. **Every time an incarcerated individual calls a loved-one they are charged between 6¢ and 25¢ per minute, which is sometimes more than someone earns during an hour of forced labor.** Agricultural products and produce are among the goods cultivated by people in prison and are often sold to everyday industry giants such as Walmart and McDonalds ⁽²⁾. In May 2026, the US 5th District Court found that agricultural working conditions of incarcerated individuals at the Louisiana State Penitentiary are unconstitutional, but could not provide remedial measures to end the practice.

Not only do state prisons profit off the incarceration of humans, so do local parishes that have been outsourced to people serving state sentences. This practice was intended to prevent overcrowding in state prisons, rather than implementing reforms that actually reduce the prison population. Local sheriffs in Louisiana get paid a per-diem rate for every person post-conviction they house. The per-diem rate was increased to \$29.39 during the 2026 legislative session. **Many rural parishes have intentionally expanded the number of incarcerated people their local jails can hold in order to accommodate people serving “state time,” and increase revenue for local agencies, sometimes by millions of dollars** ⁽³⁾. Local jails - designed to incarcerate individuals prior to trial - do not have the same rehabilitation programs that state prisons do. Meaning that more than 50% of Louisiana’s prison population are likely missing out on programming that would decrease recidivism upon release ⁽⁴⁾. Parishes that *do* have work-release programs allow sheriffs to garnish the wages of people who participate in those programs ⁽⁵⁾. The theft of wages only exacerbates the financial strain of incarceration on individuals and families.

Beyond the growing number of individuals incarcerated for subjective criminal offenses, Louisiana’s detention of immigrants has skyrocketed over the past two years. Louisiana is home to ten immigrant detention facilities, including the Alexandria Staging Facility: the only detention center in the United States with an airport to execute deportations, and Camp J: a notoriously abusive wing of the Louisiana State Penitentiary designed for solidarity confinement, which closed in 2018 due to safety and security concerns that was reopened as Camp 57 ⁽⁶⁾. **On any given day more than 60,000 people are confined in detention facilities across the US, with more than 8,000 housed in Louisiana** ^(7, 8). Similarly to people in state prisons, people in immigration detention are forced to work – now without pay due to a recent federal law ⁽⁹⁾. The outcome of this labor turns a profit for private prison groups such as GEO Group, CoreCivic, and Lasalle Corrections. From the enslavement of Africans and Indigenous people across the Americas, to modern practices of extreme sentences, kidnappings, forced confinement, and forced labor, the United States, corporations, and selfish individuals continue to profit off exploitation.

These practices and industries do not need to be our reality. Privatization of

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

Opportunities:

Submit to The Lavender

South: Calling all LGBTQ+ Southern creatives! The Lavender South is now accepting submissions of personal essays, poetry, and art focused on your vision of a queer Southern future.

Submissions due Tuesday, June 30th. [Learn more here.](#)

breeds competition, and a never ending desire for growth, which breeds overconsumption. Decision makers in power are guided by this ideology. They refuse the knowledge and practice of abundance and shared resources. **Imagine if a \$445 billion budget went towards funding housing, healthcare, primary and continued education, climate resistant infrastructure, libraries and youth programs, public transportation, mental health resources and drug rehabilitation programs.** It is possible to move away from a system that seeks to profit off of every interaction. The state of Illinois effectively ended the practice of cash bail in 2023, turning towards the practice of recognizance, and creating conditions of release that will be supportive to the individual rather than financially supportive of the court and private entities.

If we are committed to justice, our work must be to dismantle systems that profit from punishment and instead invest in practices that restore dignity, repair harm, and meet people's needs.

1. Kang-Brown, J. & Wagner, P. (2026, February 11). Following the Money of Mass Incarceration 2026. Prison Policy Initiative. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/money2026.html>
2. McDowell, R. (2024, January 29). Prisoners in the US are part of a hidden workforce linked to hundreds of popular food brands. The Associated Press. <https://archive.ph/WonW9#selection-3115.0-3115.92>
3. Misick, B. (2024, January 24). Louisiana still leads nation for state prisoners held in local jails. Louisiana Illuminator. <https://lailluminator.com/2024/01/24/louisiana-local-jails/>
4. Misick, B. (2024, January 24). Louisiana still leads nation for state prisoners held in local jails. Louisiana Illuminator. <https://lailluminator.com/2024/01/24/louisiana-local-jails/>
5. O'Donoghue, J. (2018, February 18). Sheriffs to receive money from Louisiana's prison system overhaul. The Times-Picayune. <https://archive.ph/2gV6P#selection-2529.0-2529.65>
6. Crawford, A. & Kenney, E. (2026, January 30). Reopening the Plantation: Immigration Detention in Louisiana's Angola Prison. Vera Institute of Justice. <https://www.vera.org/news/reopening-the-plantation-immigration-detention-in-angola-prison>
7. Cancian, M., Cantu, N., Howard, L., & Watson, T. (2026, May 18). The administration has detained 400,000 immigrants: What do we know about their children?. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-administration-has-detained-400000-immigrants-what-do-we-know-about-their-children/>
8. Ahmed, N., & Perry, A. (2026, January 19). YEAR ONE, Immigrant Detention in Louisiana Under The Trump Administration. American Civil Liberties Union Louisiana. <https://www.iaaclu.org/app/uploads/2026/01/2026.01.19-Year-One.pdf>
9. Golding, B. (2026, June 16). New ICE rule, requested by top contractor, ends pay requirement for migrants who work while detained. The Independent. <https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/migrants-ice-detention-law-geo-group-b2996910.html>

Meg Gonzalez is an alum of Loyola University New Orleans. Graduating in 2022, she studied sociology with a focus on the pre-trial and post-conviction criminal legal systems in New Orleans. Originally from Maryland, Meg has lived in Louisiana for seven years and has professional experience in law, education, affordable housing, and agriculture.

Monthly articles reflect the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of Loyola University New Orleans.

Please send feedback to jsri@loyno.edu.

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS

As our prison education program continues to grow, we need to make sure that each and every one has access to an exceptional educational experience. We can't do it without your help. [Give today!](#)

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

6363 St. Charles Avenue | New Orleans, LA 70118

This email was sent to .

To ensure that you continue receiving our emails, please add us to your address book or safe list.

[manage](#) your preferences | [opt out](#) of all Loyola e-newsletters

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.