



## Concept Paper

### Mission

JustLeadershipUSA (JLUSA) is dedicated to reducing crime and cutting the US prison population in half by 2030. We empower people most affected by incarceration to drive policy reform.

### The Need

"Too many Americans go to too many prisons for far too long, and for no truly good law enforcement reason," Eric H. Holder, Jr., Attorney General of the United States.

Today, there are more than 2.3 million Americans behind bars. Contrary to what many believe, violent crime is not the primary reason for the unprecedented incarceration rate in the US. Rather, ineffective policies such as the "war on drugs," mandatory minimum sentencing, and "three strikes" laws have fueled this explosive growth.

### What We Do

To realize our vision and achieve our goals, we:

1. **Develop and support formerly incarcerated leaders**
2. **Build and sustain an engaged national membership**
3. **Drive policy advocacy efforts on the federal, state and local levels**

### Leadership Development

JustLeadershipUSA is creating a national network of leaders united through a shared vision for criminal justice reform. With the Center for Institutional and Social Change at Columbia University, we have partnered with leaders who are formerly incarcerated to research, develop, and employ a dynamic and inclusive leadership model.

### Membership

JustLeadershipUSA believes that systemic change is accelerated through strength in numbers. We encourage Americans of all backgrounds to band together against policies that destroy families and communities, squander the potential of millions of people, and waste taxpayer money.

### Advocacy

JustLeadershipUSA believes that those closest to the problem are closest to the solution. We infuse dialogue on reform with the voice, vision and leadership of people directly affected by crime and incarceration.

**#halfby2030**

**#JLUSA**

### Sobering Statistics

*There are more African American men in prison or jail or on probation/parole than were enslaved in 1850, before the Civil War began.*

*Today, 94% of people in federal prison have nonviolent convictions.*

*The majority of people in prison had an income of less than \$2000 in the month prior to arrest (70% of people in state and 58% of people in federal).*

*On any given day, one in every 10 African American men in his 30s is in prison or jail.*

*The number of women in prison, many of whom are incarcerated for drug offenses, has been increasing at a rate 50 percent higher than men since 1980.*

*The United States stands alone as the only nation that sentences people to life without parole for crimes committed before turning 18.*

*2.7 million children under the age of 18 have a parent in prison or jail.*