

#WORKINGfuture

A campaign led by JLUSA

Led by **JustLeadershipUSA**, and in partnership with directly impacted communities, the **#WORKINGfuture** campaign seeks to eliminate the devastating barriers that people with records must overcome. The **#WORKINGfuture** campaign will build power within and among impacted communities to challenge legislative obstacles that exclude people from the fair chance they always deserved, and transform the narrative about the negative impacts of intentional consequences on people, families, and communities.

Nearly one in three Americans have a criminal record. Today, more than 2.2 million people are in jail or prison and approximately 4.7 million people are on probation or parole.

For the 70-plus million people living with a criminal record, their punishment is not limited to the court's sentence. A criminal record can produce a lifetime of barriers and exclusions which are often called "collateral consequences."

Despite the implied meaning of the word "collateral," this post-punishment persecution is anything but unintended. Rather, the penalties that follow a conviction—including voter disenfranchisement and the loss of housing, healthcare, education, and employment—are deliberate choices that policymakers and legislators have made for years, and they function to marginalize and disenfranchise entire communities. While invisible at sentencing, and therefore not considered in court decision-making, there are at least **48,000 laws or statutes** that restrict and diminish the lives and redemptive potential of people with a record.

These intentional consequences are the primary drivers of **mass criminalization**. These consequences reinforce the stigma associated with a criminal conviction, branding those who have a record with an unavoidable scarlet letter.

Even without a conviction, any contact with the criminal justice system can begin to create burdens on a person's life. At every step in the criminal justice system—with every arrest, every conviction, every sentence to jail, prison, or community supervision—roadblocks go up and opportunities erode. And for people who were incarcerated, the data reveals the enormity of this challenge: **over 60% are unemployed a year after their release**.

Bold solutions are needed, now. When society and institutions leave people branded and stranded due to overbearing restrictions that result from a criminal record, whole communities suffer. Neighborhoods of color and low-income communities where poverty and unemployment are coupled with racist over-policing are disproportionately impacted. The **#WORKINGfuture** campaign centers the experience of people who have a criminal records. Together with partners across the U.S., we will dismantle the collateral consequences that destroy a person's ability to reenter and contribute to their community. In order to prevent system-involvement and to address the needs of our returning neighbors, we must remove barriers and build communities that provide a basic safety net: transportation, community spaces, housing, healthcare, education, and employment.