



For Immediate Release

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Town Hall Meeting Designed to Offer Pathway to Whites to Help Fight Mass Incarceration in Los Angeles County

JusticeLA brings fight against L.A. jail expansion to Hollywood

LOS ANGELES, CA, January 8, 2018 - **JusticeLA**, a community-driven coalition of organizations challenging the **Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors** on their plan to spend \$3.5 billion expanding the jail system, will hold a town hall meeting on **Thursday, January 11** in Hollywood to discuss their campaign to call on the County to redirect funds into community services and other alternatives to incarceration. Panelists include **Patrisse Khan-Cullors** (Co-Founder of JusticeLA and Black Lives Matter, Founder of Dignity and Power Now), **Mark-Anthony Johnson** (JusticeLA), **Kim McGill** (Youth Justice Coalition), **Peter Eliasberg** (ACLU So Cal), and **Kelly Lytle Hernandez** (UCLA Bunche Center/Million Dollar Hoods). The second in a series of town hall meetings being held in each of L.A. County's five supervisorial districts, **JusticeLA's** third district town hall meeting is being held in conjunction with **White People For Black Lives**, the **ACLU of Southern California** and the event's venue **Hollywood United Methodist Church** and will have a specific focus on bringing more non-people of color into the conversation surrounding ending mass incarceration. The town hall meeting will be held on Thursday, January 11 at 7 p.m. at the Hollywood United Methodist Church (6817 Franklin Avenue).

“This is an opportunity to get educated on the history of L.A.’s jail system, which is the largest in the world in addition to learning about the County’s current practices and costs versus the needs of the community including current conditions of incarceration in L.A. County jails,” **said JusticeLA’s Mark-Anthony Johnson.** “This conversation is right on time since California’s State Attorney General just certified a statewide ballot initiative (Reducing Crime and Keeping California Safe Act of 2018) to begin collecting signatures to bring back a lot of the criminal justice reforms we fought for and secured in the passage of AB 109 and Propositions 47 and 57.”

Jason David, co-founder of Aware-LA and White People For Black Lives said, “Although more and more white people are beginning to question and even oppose the expansion of jails and the system of mass incarceration in this country, it is too often the everyday subtle acts of complicity and complacency by white and wealthy people think these systems are justified in some way. They think these systems don’t directly affect them or that they cannot do something to change such an overbearing problem. Historically, it has largely been the passive acceptance and permission of white people that has allowed for violent atrocities and acts of oppression to be systemically enacted on people of color. This town hall will offer not only a venue for dialogue and discussion, but an invitation and pathway for white people to use their voices to challenge such a vast investment in jail expansion, and more broadly, what many social scientists are increasingly calling, the most recent manifestation of slavery and Jim Crow: mass incarceration.”

According to **UCLA’s Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies** as part of an incarceration mapping project called “[Million Dollar Hoods](#),” individuals arrested in America’s second largest city, Los Angeles, most of them from the city’s poorest neighborhoods, paid nearly \$194 million in nonrefundable bail bond deposits and more than \$17.5 million in cash between 2012-2016. The study also found that of the \$193.7 million in nonrefundable deposits paid to bond agents during the period, Latinos paid \$92.1 million, African Americans paid \$40.7 million, and whites paid \$37.9 million.

In L.A. County’s 3rd Supervisorial District which encompasses 431 square miles, stretching from the ocean to Los Feliz, and from Venice up to San Fernando including the communities of Beverly Hills, Malibu, Pacoima, Van Nuys, West Hollywood, Santa Monica and Woodland Hills, DUI, drug possession and domestic violence topped the list of violations resulting in arrests between 2010 and 2015.

“The ACLU So Cal is deeply committed to ending mass incarceration,” **explained Peter Eliasberg, chief counsel at the ACLU of Southern California.** “We have been

working very hard in Los Angeles, California, and throughout the nation to reform our broken pretrial system, which leaves far too many people warehoused in jail just because they cannot afford to make bail and pushing to end the scourge of having our jails and prisons act as our nation's largest psychiatric hospitals. There are many opportunities to slash the number of people in the Los Angeles County jails, which is the largest jail system in the country. The County must aggressively pursue all of them before investing billions of dollars in a massive project of jail construction."

In addition to the town hall meeting **JusticeLA**, White People For Black Lives and the ACLU of Southern California will announce a new petition calling on 3rd District **Los Angeles County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl** to support community-based alternatives to building new jails.

Rev. Kathy Cooper Ledesma, Senior Pastor at Hollywood United Methodist Church added, "United Methodists believe in restorative justice. Our 2016 Book of Discipline urges the creation of a genuinely new system for the care and restoration of victims, offenders, criminal justice officials and the community as a whole. Restorative justice grows out of biblical authority, which emphasizes a right relationship with God, self, and community."

"As a United Methodist pastor in the City of Los Angeles, I believe spending \$3.5 billion to expand the current broken retributive justice system, instead of seeking new investments in restorative justice, would be a sin."

For more information, please visit justicelanow.org.

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JusticeLA, in partnership with community organizations working with directly impacted communities affected by incarceration, was formed to reclaim, reimagine and reinvest what L.A. County could do with the \$3.5 billion allocated to building two new jails. JusticeLA was formed by Patrisse Cullors, co-founder of Black Lives Matter and anchor organizations: Californians United for Responsible Budget (CURB), Community Coalition, Dignity and Power Now, Immigrant Youth Coalition, Revolve Impact, TransLatin@ Coalition and Youth Justice Coalition. JusticeLANow.org.