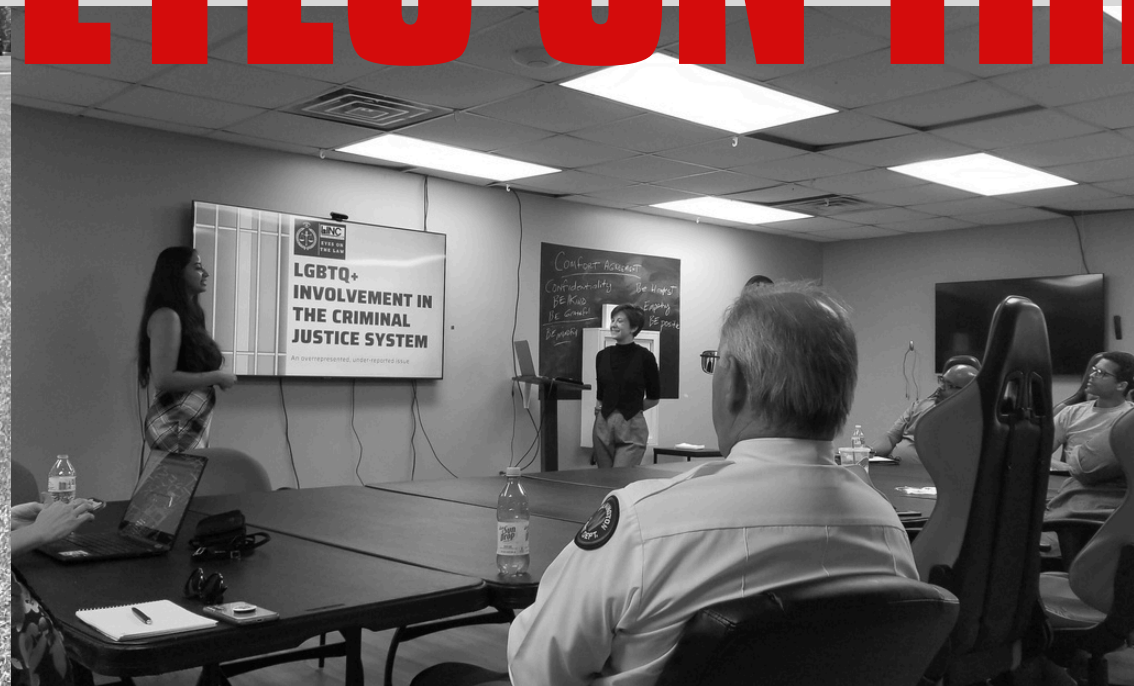


A black and white photograph showing two hands gripping vertical metal bars, likely from a prison cell. The hands are positioned on either side of the text, with fingers wrapped around the bars. The background is dark, emphasizing the hands and the bars. The text 'MASS INCARCERATION' is overlaid in a bold, red, sans-serif font, centered between the two hands.

**MASS
INCARCERATION**

EYES ON THE LAW



- Eyes on the Law provides data-driven insights to inform and empower the community by publicizing knowledge for justice.
- Co-authored by Telesa Jones (Justice Services Coordinator) & Cooper Mertens (Data & Impact Analyst)
- Provide trainings and publications on various topics regarding human rights, public policy and reentry
- Publication topics include:
 - Dehumanized, Degraded & Disconnected: The Experience of Incarcerated Pregnant Women
 - Interactions with Incarceration: Youth Sentencing
 - The Bars Between Us: Realities Growing Up With Incarceration
 - Introduction to Trauma Informed Courts
 - Upcoming: Comprehensive Guide to Reentry & Out of Site: Unveiling Truths about LGBTQIA+ Involvement in the Justice System
- Training topics:
 - School to Prison Pipeline
 - Advocacy
 - Expungement
 - Mass Incarceration
- Contact Us: eyesonthelaw@lincnc.org

HISTORY, RACE & PRISON

- 1865: The end of the Civil War. The 1860's were marked by an economic depression due to the loss of labor from enslaved people. (Black Americans made up 95% of the Southern population)
 - Passing of the 13th Amendment on January 31, 1865: Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, **except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted**, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." -Article 1 of the 13th Amendment
- Between 1926-1940: State prison populations across the US increased by 67%
- Systematic Racism and targeting of Black populations
 - Black Codes: laws that explicitly applied only to Black people and subjected them to criminal prosecution for "offenses" such as loitering, breaking curfew, vagrancy, having weapons, and not carrying proof of employment.
 - Prison Farms & Convict Leasing:
 - After the Civil War, slavery persisted in the form of convict leasing, a system in which Southern states leased prisoners to private railways, mines, and large plantations. While states profited, incarcerated individuals earned no pay and faced inhumane, dangerous, and often deadly work conditions.
- Great Migration (1910-1970); 6 million Black people move from the South to Northern urban centers
 - Prison populations expanded
 - Criminality becomes associated with 3 "lower" class groups: poor whites, immigrants and Black Americans
 - In the period of 1900-1950, the racial disparities in prisons populations doubled



Prison Industrial Systems



- 1910-1930: Prison Industrial Systems in the North become prevalent
 - Incarcerated people were forced to work for private or state industry or public works
 - Profits were the main concern
 - As organized labor expanded and federal legislation restricted interstate commerce of goods-many industrial-style prisons came to an end
 - However, the conditions of incarceration remained similar except labor became "valueless" like rock breaking rather than factory labor
- 1928: End of Convict leasing; beginning of chain gangs
 - Groups of forced laborers with tasks such as road construction, ditch digging, or farming while chained together. Some chain gangs toiled at work sites near the prison, while others were housed in transportable jails such as railroad cars or trucks
 - Cut costs of supervision
- 1940's: Emergence of the "correctional institution"; Prisons offered more recreation, visitation and were more geared towards rehabilitation. However, these programs were reserved for white people. Incarcerated Black Americans lived in race-segregated housing units and were largely excluded from prison social life.

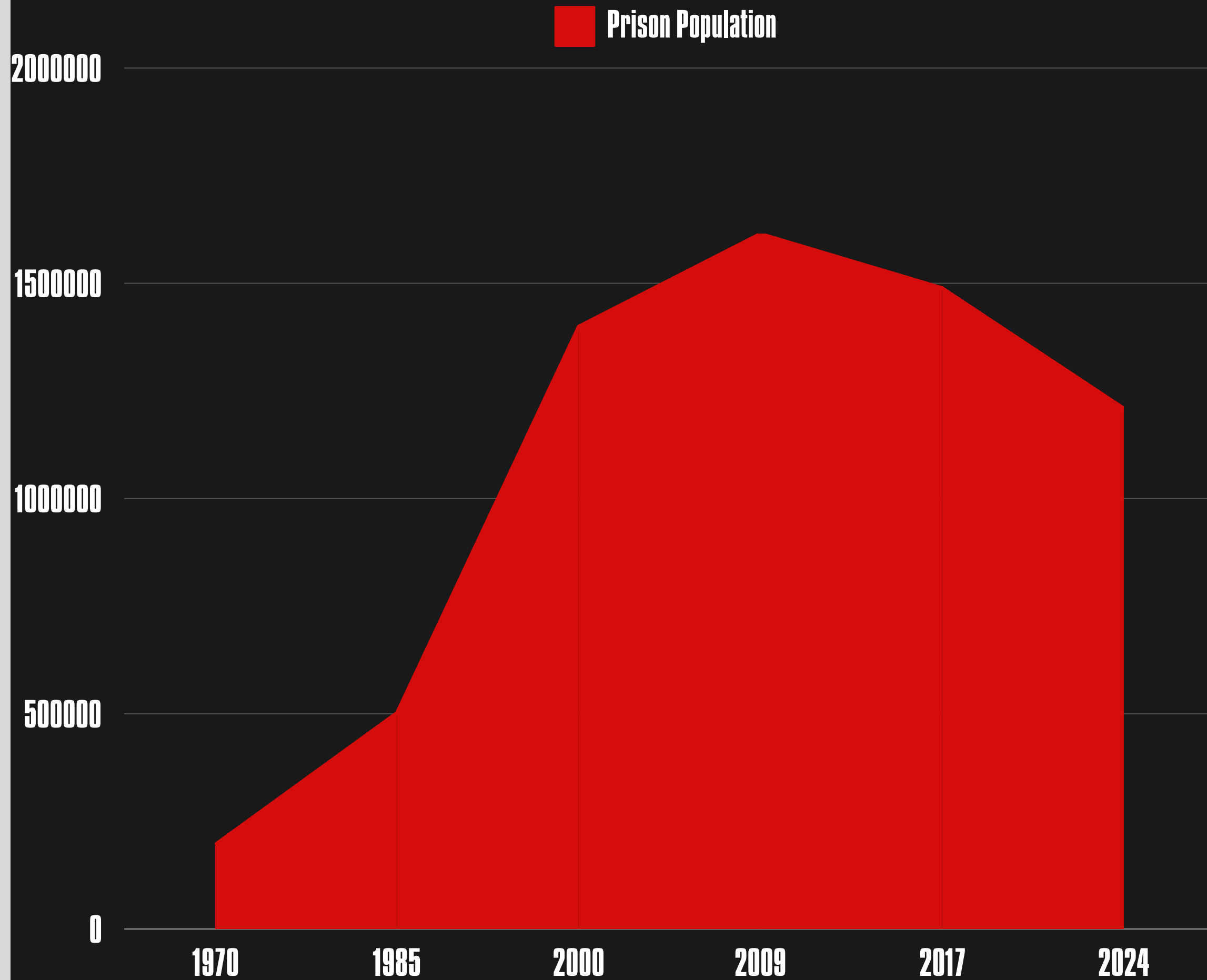




LAW & ORDER

- “Law & Order” was originally coined by Barry Goldwater (Republican Senator from Arizona) in the 1960's during his run for president in 1964.
 - Message that argued that the Civil Rights movement had contributed to public unrest and began association with rises in crime
 - Contained rhetoric with racial undertones
 - Includes dissatisfaction with anti-war protests, changing moral values and a legitimate rise in crime
 - Ultimately, the political statements of “law and order” appealed to White Americans
 - Led to Ronald Regan’s election as president
 - Weakened Lyndon B. Johnson Great Society programs and the liberal political position
- 1965: “War on Crime”
 - perceived increases in crime in urban centers—largely populated by Black Americans— became connected with race
- Southern Strategy
 - Electoral strategy to increase political support among white voters in the South by appealing to racism against Black Americans.
 - Civil Rights Movement and dismantling of Jim Crow laws in the 1950s and 1960s visibly deepened existing racial tensions in much of the Southern United States
- War on Drugs in the 1970s
 - Disproportionally targeted Black populations
 - Massive gap between the amounts of crack and powder cocaine that resulted in the same minimum sentence. Possession of 5 grams of crack led to an automatic 5 year sentence while it took 500 grams of powder cocaine to trigger the same sentence
 - 80% of those who used crack were Black
 - “Mandatory minimum” prison sentences for drug-related cases
 - Reform such as Fair Sentencing Act in 2010 and other Prison Reform Legislation

THE NUMBERS



Prison Population

- Prison population has decreased by 20% since its peak in 2008
- However, mass incarceration remains an issue and racial disparities continue to prevail

UNITED STATES

- Over 1.9 million people are incarcerated in the United States
 - This number includes: state prisons, federal prisons, local jails, juvenile correction, immigration detention, military prisons, etc.
 - **Highest incarceration rate of any democratic nation**
 - **583 per 100,000 residents**
 - Impose larger incarceration sentences
 - 5% of the global population, 25% of the world's prison population
- Racial disparities:
 - Black Americans make up 35% of the prison and jail populations but only 14% of the U.S. population
 - 3.4x more likely to be incarcerated
 - **There is no evidence that Black people commit crimes at a higher rate than any other race**
- Public vs Private owned prison systems profiting off of mass incarceration
 - Private companies are frequently granted contracts to operate prison food and health services
 - jail telecom and commissary functions have spawned multi-billion dollar private industries
 - The national average for individuals working within the prison system is \$3.45 per day. However, there are states that pay none
 - Work in prison is compulsory, with little regulation or oversight, and incarcerated workers have few rights and protections.
 - Not working may end in disciplinary action
 - Wages they receive often go right back to the prison, which charges them for basic necessities like medical visits and hygiene items





NORTH CAROLINA

- About 57,000 people are incarcerated in NC. The incarceration rate is 559 per 100,000
 - Every year 128,000 different individuals are incarcerated in NC jails
- Prisons in North Carolina force incarcerated people and their families — to subsidize mass incarceration.
 - Shadow budgets: phone calls, e-messaging, commissary etc
- Pre-trial incarceration policies:
 - 82% of people in North Carolina jails have not been convicted of a crime
- Criminalizing “Failure to Appear”
- Fines and Fees
- Inability to meet critical mental health and substance uses needs inside of facilities
- **Black people in North Carolina are incarcerated at a rate 3.7x higher than white people**

MYTHS & MESSAGES



- Black Americans are incarcerated at a higher rate despite there being no evidence that Black people commit more crimes than any other race
- Systematic racism and the designs of our modern prison systems have contributed to mass incarceration and racial disparities that we see
 - While reform and improvements have undoubtedly been made, there is still a long way to go
 - Non-partisan partnership in prison reform and reentry
- While crime rates have reached historic lows, what has changed most is the public perception of “crime” (ie: substance use being a public health issue rather than a crime)
- **Harsh punishments do not deter crime or make us safer**
 - Post-incarceration syndrome
 - Increases recidivism
 - Should address the leading causes of justice-involvement
 - Poverty and lack of economic stability
 - Trauma
 - Education
 - Public Health & Social determinants of health
 - Affordable and accessible housing
- High costs of low level offenses
 - invest in community-driven safety initiatives
 - invest in rehabilitation and reentry
 - reform probation and parole: unnecessary violations
 - criminalization of homelessness
- Collateral consequences
 - stigma
 - further inhibits opportunity
- Reform our sentencing systems to reevaluate the definition of “violent” crime

LOCAL REENTRY COUNCIL

- LINC's LRC and LRCs across the state play a pivotal role in addressing mass incarceration
- LRC provides:
 - educational opportunities
 - career advancement
 - resume writing
 - job training
 - skill obtainment
 - Supports with obtaining affordable housing
 - Transportation
 - Basic needs
- Investing in community-support systems that work to prevent contact with the legal system and/or address the needs of returning citizens so recidivism rates drop is one of the most effective ways to address mass incarceration
- LRC provides the much needed support for individuals and their families in addressing the social determinants of health



RESOURCES



<https://www.vera.org/reimagining-prison-web-report/american-history-race-and-prison>

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/war-on-drugs>

<https://www.sentencingproject.org/reports/mass-incarceration-trends/>

<https://www.aclu.org/issues/smart-justice/mass-incarceration>

<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2024.html>

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/prison-population-by-state>

<https://www.fwd.us/news/turning-the-tide-on-mass-incarceration/>

<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/NC.html>