



American Friends Service Committee

ARIZONA OFFICE

2017 Annual Report



Message from the Director:

In 2017, the American Friends Service Committee celebrated its Centennial. *We are immensely proud to be part of an organization that has spent the last 100 years defending human rights and justice.*

This longevity is a testament to the integrity of the work and the impact it has in the world.

When I started out as an intern here at the Arizona office in 1995, criminal justice reform was a radical notion. Tough-on-crime was the buzzword, and speaking up for the rights of defendants or incarcerated people was dismissed as bleeding-heart naivete or maligned as undermining public safety.



The AFSC-AZ Team

October 2017

Today, our coalition partners include conservative organizations like Right on Crime, the Reason Foundation, and the Goldwater Institute. Our work is cited by *The Atlantic* and *Sports Illustrated*. And formerly incarcerated people are leading the movement for reform.

In 2017, AFSC Arizona is the go-to organization on criminal justice reform statewide, and an increasingly influential voice nationally on issues related to criminalization, for-profit prisons, and mass incarceration.

That is largely due to our staying power and persistence. We have remained true to our mission, done good work, and are now well-positioned to help guide the new conversations, projects, and energy amassing behind this movement for reform.

Thank you for standing with us. We hope you'll stick around for the next 100 years.

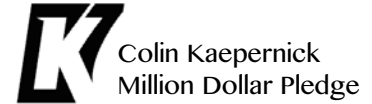
Just imagine what we can do together!

Caroline Isaacs, Program Director



Expanding Our Work

Our program and staff have grown through the generous support of these foundations:



Please welcome Joe Watson, our *Research and Social Media Consultant*

Joe has nearly 20 years' experience as an investigative journalist, and has reported on issues related to mass incarceration and prison privatization for multiple outlets, including Village Voice Media, Edible Baja Arizona, and the Human Rights Defense Center. He has been honored for his work by the Association of Alternative NewsMedia, the Arizona Press Club, and the First Amendment Coalition of Arizona. Joe was just awarded a 2018 MacDowell Fellowship.

Reducing Prison Populations

More Legislative Victories!

For the sixth year in a row, we were successful in advancing progressive sentencing reform legislation. In 2017, not one but TWO of our bills passed and were signed into law:

"Swift and Certain" Sanctions: Requires the Department of Corrections to adopt a system of graduated sanctions (instead of revoking the person back to prison) for violations of community supervision like having a positive drug test or missing an appointment with their probation officer (not for committing new crimes). These 'technical violations' represent 17% of people entering prison every year, so we anticipate the change will have a dramatic impact on the prison population.



Caroline Isaacs (left) speaks with Arizona Legislatures about opportunities during legislative session to move towards reform.
January 2017



Provisional Occupational Licenses for people with felony convictions: Allows state professional licensing authorities to issue provisional licenses to people with felony convictions if they are determined to be otherwise qualified applicants. Currently, each occupation has different rules and requirements, many of which disqualify individuals based on their conviction history, making it difficult for formerly incarcerated people to get good jobs.

Drug Sentencing Report

Over the summer of 2016, AFSC-AZ conducted the first-ever research study into drug sentencing in Arizona. Incredibly, there is no aggregate court and sentencing data on how various statutes are applied, with each county keeping their own records, in their own format—some are not even computerized.



AFSC-AZ collected data from three counties (Maricopa, Pima, and Yavapai) on drug crimes that resulted in prison sentences in 2015. Through our Public Welfare Foundation funding, we hired four law students to physically go the county courts, search files, and upload the relevant data into a spreadsheet that staff member Rebecca Fealk designed.

The results were staggering, showing significant racial disparities and the criminalization of addiction. You can read the full report on our website, www.afscarizona.org.

The report was released in August 2017, with an overwhelming positive response. There was coverage from *The Arizona Daily Star*, *KJZZ-NPR*, *Arizona Capitol Times*, and others. The report has been used by various outlets, including *The Atlantic* magazine, to cite statistics, problems with Arizona sentencing laws, and the need for significant reform.



AZ Democratic Senator Martin Quezada, Caroline Isaacs, and Former Police Officer Terry Belvins at the Drug Sentencing Report Press Briefing.

August 2017



Opposing Prison Expansion and For-Profit Incarceration

Victory! AFSC-AZ's work fighting against private prison companies over the past decade has started to show at the state legislature. For the first time in recent memory, a proposal for more prison beds was not automatically approved. In an interesting twist, the FY2017 budget mandated that the Arizona Department of Corrections must demonstrate that the prison population had grown significantly before funding for new beds would be approved. The population did not grow, so no new prisons were built.

The Treatment Industrial Complex

Spreading the Word

Following the release of the Community Cages report last year, work around the Treatment Industrial Complex (TIC) focused on sharing action steps that individuals and leaders can do to prevent private prison companies from expanding in their community.

The 2017 Community Cages tour stretched from California to Washington D.C., with AFSC-AZ staff meeting with a diverse array of partners—from grassroots organizers to elected state and federal representatives. The tour highlighted discussions on how to recognize TIC companies, identifying real alternatives to incarceration, and how to draft city ordinances to prevent procurement of private prison contracts.

Local Campaigns to Stop Private Prison Companies

Following the unfortunate vote to use private prison company, CoreCivic, for the Mesa City Jail in May 2017, AFSC-AZ began a campaign to prevent other municipalities from making the same precarious choice. Staff have been working with the Pima County Board of Supervisors and the Tucson City Council on resolutions against privatizing county jails or detention services.

AFSC-AZ drafted resolution language that was on the Pima County Board of Supervisors agenda December 19th. With the support of District 5 Supervisor Richard Elías, the Resolution was passed! AFSC-AZ will continue to work with the Tucson City Council to pass a similar resolution at the city level in 2018.



*Joe Watson, Sharon Bronson – BOS District 3,
Caroline Isaacs, and Richard Elías –BOS District 5.
December 2017*



Reframing Justice

Blurring the Boundaries

On May 31, we organized a one-day conference entitled, *Blurring the Boundaries: Trauma and Healing Justice*. The conference explored the issue of trauma in relationship to the criminal punishment system. The day featured a keynote address by Glenn Martin of JustLeadershipUSA (JLUSA), as well as a panel of experts from across the spectrum of the system.



AFSC-AZ Staff, including West Region Director Sonia Tuma (left), with Glenn E. Martin (third from left), President and Founder of JustLeadershipUSA

May 2017

The over 140 attendees included formerly incarcerated people, students, probation officers, court personnel, direct service providers, and even a Superior Court Judge. The event was also livestreamed, with over 400 people watching online. You can watch a video that provides a summary of the event on our website, www.afscarizona.org.

Prison-to-Higher Education Pipeline

Reframing Justice brought in renowned poet and author, Reginald Dwayne Betts to meet with people incarcerated in Arizona State Prison Complex – Tucson, and have a discussion about barriers to higher education due to felony convictions. In collaboration with the University of Arizona’s College of Behavioral and Social Sciences and the Tucson Poetry, a discussion entitled *Building the Prison-to-Higher-Education Pipeline* involved Betts and three other panelists identifying the collateral consequences and second-class citizenship given to people who have been systems involved. The result was an enthusiastic push for Arizona colleges to change their options for admitting students and hiring faculty who have been system involved. Dean of the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences said the event was, “...the most powerful evening he has ever spent at the University of Arizona.”



Grace Gámez with Reginald Dwayne Betts.

August 2017



The AtlanticLIVE with Pima County Safety + Justice

In December, Reframing Justice Program Coordinator Grace Gámez was a panelist on a discussion hosted by *The Atlantic* magazine for their Race + Justice series. This national broadcast promoted discussion about the criminal justice system in Pima County, and racial disparities within the jail population, the role of police in low-income and undocumented communities, and understanding addiction as a disease, not a crime. Grace spoke on the role of community efforts to address incarceration without punitive or institutional entities, highlighting local organizations such as Flowers and Bullets and Tierra Y Libertad Organization. Focusing on the AFSC approach of *healing justice*, Grace emphasized reimagining a justice system where love and support are present instead of punitive actions.



“How do we create a system where we love one another--whether you have harmed someone or whether you have been harmed? And what if we order our communities that way too? I think that that is a justice system.”

Dr. Grace Gámez
Reframing Justice Program Coordinator

 American Friends Service Committee
Arizona Office
Find out more at www.afscarizona.org

Impacting Change in Arizona

In this tumultuous time, the work of social justice organizations is imperative. Your voice is needed in pushing leaders to reform sentencing laws, fighting against predatory companies, and rethinking how we as a society speak about people who have been system involved. Stay connected with AFSC-AZ throughout the year by following us on social media, joining us at events, and providing financial support.



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Write a check and simply mail your contribution to our office.

On your check, be sure to earmark your contribution for the Arizona office.

Simply write “Arizona office” on memo line on the bottom left corner of your check.

→ Please note that if you do not explicitly state on your check or otherwise in writing that you want your donation to go to Arizona, it will automatically be deposited into AFSC’s national general fund.

THANK YOU!



**American Friends
Service Committee**
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