



Issues

A Newsletter of the Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center

Recent Executions Stopped in Ohio

The last three scheduled executions in Ohio have not happened. For a variety of reasons and concerns, the executions of Alva Campbell, Raymond Tibbetts and William Montgomery have either been called off or postponed. Each one of these cases points towards larger issues with the death penalty system as a whole.

The earliest of these was November 2017, with the attempted execution of Alva Campbell. Campbell suffered from a number of serious medical conditions. On the day of the execution, Gov. Kasich gave a temporary reprieve after executioners had attempted to find a suitable vein for injection. Although he was given an execution date in 2019, Campbell died of his illnesses in March.

Raymond Tibbetts was scheduled for execution on February 13th. A few days before, Governor Kasich delayed the execution in order to allow more time to investigate his case. Kasich gave the delay after

receiving a letter written by a juror that was assigned to Tibbetts' case, saying that if he would have known some of the mitigating evidence that was previously withheld, he would not have sentenced Tibbetts to death. This evidence included details on Tibbetts' past, including his trauma from an abusive childhood. Raymond Tibbetts' execution is currently scheduled for October 17th, but is still undergoing investigation.

The third and most recent scheduled execution was for William Montgomery, on April 11th. In late March, the parole board recommended that Gov. Kasich grant clemency due to the many doubts that remain in his case. With all of these doubts, it is possible he was wrongfully convicted. After a public campaign led by Ohioans to Stop Executions and supported by IJPC, Gov. Kasich granted clemency and Montgomery's sentence was changed to life without parole in early April. The next step for

Montgomery's case is to wait for a possible new trial, where his case would be re-examined.

These cases reflect the problems with our current capital punishment system. It is not humane to try and execute someone like Alva Campbell who was dealing with medical problems. Cases with as much doubt as William Montgomery's should not be eligible for the death penalty. People who have suffered from trauma and abuse like Raymond Tibbetts should be given more aid rather than be sentenced to death. Considering that Ohio has yet to execute anyone this year, the state needs to question if all of the time, money, and effort put into the death penalty is worth it. Once all of these issues are examined, the answer may very well be no.

Robert Van Hook is scheduled to be executed next on July 18th. Please keep an eye out to our death penalty e-newsletters and our website for how you can take action to call on Kasich to stop this next execution.

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We're grateful to all our business and organizational sponsors who support Team IJPC!

On May 5th and 6th, over 30 Piggies for Peace ran or walked in the 20th year of Cincinnati's Flying Pig Marathon!



Thanks to all runners, donors and sponsors who made TEAM IJPC a success!

A Letter from Allison Reynolds-Berry

"We belong to each other." Mother Teresa's words ring truest to me as we share about why we do this challenging work of systemic change. It is because we belong to each other that your struggle is my struggle. It is because of this commitment that in April, we were honored to receive the Organization of the Year Award from the Faith Community Alliance.

We do this work in collaboration with so many of you, and with partner groups and organizations. At the heart of the Immigrant Dignity Coalition and the Nonviolence Alliance of Greater Cincinnati, is a commitment to solidarity and working together to create the better reality we seek. Working together against the death penalty helped stop 3 executions in the last six months alone. We need your help to continue to that streak. Collaborating with the Nuns on the Bus – Ohio brought education about the realities of immigrant detention prisons to people across the state. The Flying Pig fundraiser was possible because of our team sponsors, participants, and everyone in their networks who made a contribution. Thank you to each of you who show up, speak out, and support IJPC.

Many of you have come to know our immigration program organizer, José Cabrera during his 2.5 years on staff at IJPC. This May, he graduates from Xavier University and is moving to DC for a yearlong Associate Program with NETWORK to continue lobbying for immigration reform. Wish him well by emailing a note or video of yourself to AdiosJC@IJPCcincinnati.org. The YES program has a strong foundation with their advisory board and a new immigration program organizer who will begin training this summer.

It's not just about belonging to one another, if we want peace, collaboration is the only way. "If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other." - Mother Teresa



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Email: info@IJPCcincinnati.org

Upcoming Events

For more details and to stay up to date, visit IJPCcincinnati.org/events

5/24 & 5/31 - Peace Movie Series

Join us as we explore some of the issues surrounding nuclear weapons through two documentaries. *Command and Control* (5/24) explores the potential dangers of holding nuclear weapons in the United States. *Countdown to Zero* (5/31) examines the path needed to get to a nuclear free world.

6/10 - Peace in the Park

The Nonviolence Alliance of Greater Cincinnati will host its first public event with a community building, family-friendly day at Ziegler Park with music, food, and informational tables.

6/24 - Festival of Faiths

Greater Cincinnati's first-ever Festival of Faiths on Sunday, June 24, 2018, at Xavier University's Cintas Center will bring together neighbors, families and spiritual leaders to celebrate the area's religious diversity. The day will feature faith-based exhibits, dialogues, workshops, art, music and fun activities for all ages. The event is free and open to the public.

6/28 - Strategies for Resilient Communities

Join the follow up program from our April Rethinking Racism panel looking at Disappearing Communities of Color.

Blinded by Backpage

Last year the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations [released a report](#) documenting how a website, Backpage.com, knowingly facilitated child sex trafficking. Backpage is similar to websites like Craigslist: places where anyone can post ads to buy and sell cars, couches, apartments, etc. The Senate report describes how the company, Backpage, told their users how to get around their own content posting rules, effectively instructing traffickers on how to post ads to sell children for sex.

In response to this report, Senator Rob Portman (R-OH) introduced SESTA, the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act. In the House, Representative Ann Wagner (R-MO-2) introduced FOSTA, the Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act. Both bills had strong bipartisan support from the beginning and moved through the legislative process fairly quickly. On April 11, 2018, [President Trump signed an amended version of FOSTA into law.](#)

Everyone knows getting bipartisan support for a piece of legislation in Congress is rare. FOSTA seemed to be a clearly defined solution to a clearly defined problem. Trafficking victims advertised on Backpage wanted the company to be held accountable for their active participation in allowing their traffickers to post ads. The victims and their lawyers [tried multiple times to sue the website](#), but often encountered a law called the Communications Decency Act (CDA). Section 230 of the CDA protects websites from being held liable for anything their third-party users post. Facebook, Google, and Twitter are also companies protected by this law.

Even though Section 230 is [not supposed to protect websites that help create illegal content](#), several judges



Senator Rob Portman in March 2018 speech about SESTA. (image credit: Sen. Portman's website)

used the law to rule in Backpage's favor. FOSTA amends Section 230 of the CDA and several other laws so that individuals and states can sue websites that "promote or facilitate prostitution" and who "knowingly assist, facilitate, or support sex trafficking."

The language used in FOSTA is so vague that websites are preemptively banning offensive words and content for fear of being sued. These actions highlight just one of the [numerous possible unintended consequences of passing this law.](#)

Advocates and prosecutors of online sex trafficking are worried that victims are going to disappear even farther into the darkest corners of the internet. Nonprofit service providers are worried their outreach to trafficking victims will be blocked by websites banning the use of certain phrases.

IJPC has been watching the progress of the SESTA and FOSTA legislation for the past few months, but only recently learned of its wider impact. We often are infatuated with bipartisan bills that aim to protect trafficking victims, but we know that finding justice for one group should not endanger another.

It is reassuring to know that [the leaders of Backpage.com were recently arrested on federal charges](#), holding them accountable for their involvement in allowing traffickers to advertise children.

IJPC will continue to watch how the FOSTA legislation unfolds to make sure victims and survivors of trafficking are found, heard, and able to see justice through.

Immigrant Detention Centers are Nun-sense - Nuns on the Bus Ohio Tour



Don Sherman outside of Boone County Jail for one of three rallies that week.

After days of meaningful conversations, impactful storytelling and [mounting public pressure](#), Congress listened. Last month, IJPC joined the Nuns on the Bus Ohio, Faith in Public Life, and NETWORK for a three day bus tour to expose the unjust system of immigrant detention and to demand the humane treatment of our migrant neighbors. Over 440 people from the Greater Cincinnati area learned how [ICE has a quota to fill 34,000](#)


[beds a day](#), how it costs taxpayers [\\$20K a year to detain one person](#) in the Boone County Jail, and how the [Office of the Inspector General reported numerous abuses](#) of immigrant detainees last year.

Thank you to everyone who joined the national call in day to #DefundICE. Because of your hard work, neither ICE nor the detention centers will receive any new funding in the omnibus spending bill.



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Contact: info@IJPCcincinnati.org to join our e-mail list to receive this newsletter online instead.

Person by Person Peace Building

The end of March marked the completion of a 12-week study offered by IJPC utilizing a curriculum produced by [Pace e Bene](#) entitled *Engage: Exploring Nonviolent Living*. 19 individuals formed two groups to explore what it means and how to become people of active nonviolence by exploring interior nonviolence, nonviolence towards others, and joining the global nonviolent movement.

The curriculum allowed participants to learn theory, history of nonviolent movements, and provided opportunity for participants to put their new knowledge and skills into practice.

Participants learned how people and institutions with power over others often resist change and how to counter that with organized nonviolent action. A culminating activity was targeting the NRA and the influence they have in politics by participating in March For Our Lives to support the advocacy efforts of the

survivors of the gun violence at Parkland High School. We broadened the scope of the conversation beyond the Parkland students to include all the many people of color who have received much less media attention by using the slogan, I feel (g)un safe and invoking the names of individuals like Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, and Samuel Dubose.

At the closing of the 12 week sessions, individuals shared their own experiences of transformation, with several people saying it changed their whole way of being in the world, from interactions with their families at home and places of work, to their local civic involvement. Many participants enjoyed the support of the group and have committed to meeting monthly as “Continuing to Engage” with the intention to continue exploring how individuals can grow in personal nonviolence and impact the broader community around them.

If you are interested in placing your name on a waiting list for the next session or joining the Continuing to Engage group, please contact Andrea at andrea@IJPCcincinnati.org.



Engage participants and friends at Cincinnati's March for Our Lives (Spring 2018)