

## Commutations NOW!

By - Bekky Baker, Program Director

It's been more than seven years since someone was executed in Ohio, due to an unofficial moratorium put in place by Governor DeWine because of an inability to access lethal injection drugs. This year, Governor DeWine finishes his last term, leaving the door open for the next governor to resume executions. Polling shows that more Ohioans support life without parole than death sentences. As the call for ending the death penalty grew louder over the years, proponents of the death penalty initiated new tactics, such as introducing nitrogen gas suffocation as an execution method. DeWine's departure leaves our state in limbo, as our legislature has yet to solidify the repeal of the death penalty.



While a bill to abolish the death penalty has not made it to DeWine's desk, he still has the power to reduce the number of people on Ohio's death row before he leaves office by enacting clemency. Governors across the country, both Republican and Democrat, have

utilized this power. Granting clemency or commutations means reducing the sentences of people who are on death row. Right now, Ohio is scheduled to carry out 30 executions starting in 2027, and if the schedule goes as planned, Ohio will be killing someone every 36 days.

Clemency allows us to chip away at a system that is inherently racist and arbitrary, a system that sentences innocent people to death. There are currently 108 people on Ohio's death row, yet we haven't imposed a new death sentence since 2019. Jurors rarely impose death, prosecutors rarely seek it, and the public increasingly rejects it. Today, there are people on Ohio's death row who were sentenced before 1996, when life without the possibility of parole was not a sentencing option.

It is time for DeWine to use his power to save the lives of people on death row and prevent looming state-sanctioned violence. You can take action by sending DeWine a handwritten letter, urging him to grant clemency. In the coming months, Ignite Peace will host letter-writing parties and provide a toolkit for how to host your own letter-writing party. Stay up to date on our latest advocacy and actions by signing up for our newsletter at [ignitepeace.org/subscribe](https://ignitepeace.org/subscribe).



Tell DeWine to grant commutations by using the above QR code or mailing a letter to:  
Governor Mike DeWine, 30th Floor, Riffe Center,  
77 S. High St., Columbus, OH, 43215-6117

## A Letter from Shannon Hughes



When out-of-town ICE contractors took it upon themselves to conduct so-called "wellness checks" on immigrant children in Cincinnati Public Schools this spring, the importance of Ignite Peace's work came into sharp focus. Months of workshops and coaching across greater Cincinnati — reaching schools, businesses, organizations, congregations, families, and individuals — helped our communities learn their rights, build local networks, and lay an important foundation.

Because of this groundwork, we could quickly and quietly gather neighbors to support Cincinnati Public Schools when ICE showed up at their school offices. We offered our presence in a tense moment and supported teachers and staff as they unpacked their experience. The Founder of the Cincinnati Parent Empowerment Network shared a public reflection after the incident, writing that Ignite Peace and the Immigrant Dignity Coalition "foster a sense of solidarity and empower families to understand their rights and access necessary services, which is essential during uncertain times."

On that day and over these past few months, our community has demonstrated what collective care and solidarity feel like in practice. The relationships built through this work are the foundation for long-term community resilience and action. Together, these same neighbors can work proactively to build the kinds of communities they want. Effective nonviolent actions like boycotts and strikes are built over time and take practice. We strengthen our muscles for nonviolence when we show up to a rally or support May Day calls to pause our participation in shopping or work. As we expand our noncooperation to stop authoritarianism, we need each other. When organizers, educators, volunteers, and neighbors continue to show up for each another, peace isn't just possible, it's inevitable. Thank you for being a part of this movement.

In peace,

## Thank you to Team (P)ignite Peace and our sponsors!

This year our Flying Pig Marathon team, a record 40 walkers and runners strong, raised more than \$18,000 to support the continued education and advocacy work of Ignite Peace. A huge and heartfelt thank you to all who supported the team, as well as our generous sponsors!



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# Defending Against Deportation

By - Samantha Searls, Program Director

It's true: ICE is detaining our community members who don't have criminal records and don't deserve to be deported, like Emerson Colindres. They've even been known to detain folks who have valid immigration status, like Imam Ayman Soliman. It's easy to see the blatant injustice in these cases.

But what about those who make mistakes? What about those with criminal records?

They don't deserve to be deported by this system either. Deportation is an extreme punishment, and our values of solidarity and compassion demand that we recognize that. The typical due process of arrest, conviction, sentencing, serving time, and release (or parole) isn't being applied to immigrants who commit a crime, often regardless of their immigration status. They are permanently separated from their families after, or even before, they serve their sentence. They disappear from our communities forever.

Take the story of Alfonso Villalobos Pirela, a 21-year-old young father who was pulled over for excessive speeding in February. He admitted wrongdoing to the officer, went through a bench trial, and pled guilty. He made a huge mistake. Yet, it was Alfonso's first ever infraction. Instead of serving the typical

sentence for a first time offender, he was handed over to ICE custody and has been in the Butler County Jail facing potential deportation ever since.



Alfonso came to the U.S. under Humanitarian Parole and had Venezuelan TPS status. He even has a case for asylum. All of that seems out of reach now that he has a criminal record.

Alfonso deserves to hold his baby girl just like any other person released from jail. Now, he may never see her again.

This government doesn't care who is "deserving" or "not deserving" of being detained and deported. They are targeting everyone perceived to be an immigrant - regardless of immigration status, country of origin, or criminal record. ICE's brutal tactics and violence touch everyone. The looming fear of immigration enforcement is terrorizing everyone. When deportation is used indiscriminately, we can see the injustice in cases, like Alfonso's, too.

Everyone detained by ICE deserves our defense and protection.

## Upcoming Events

For more events, information, and to register, visit <https://ignitepeace.org/events/>

**International Children's Day**  
Saturday, June 6

**Immigrant Dignity Coalition Meeting**  
Wednesday, June 24

**Strategic Nonviolence in Movements for Change**  
Wednesday, July 1

**Immigrant Dignity Coalition Meeting**  
Wednesday, July 22

**9th Annual Festival of Faiths**  
Sunday, August 2

**Immigrant Dignity Coalition Meeting**  
Wednesday, August 26

**Annual Gathering**  
Wednesday, October 21



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Formerly Intercommunity  
Justice and Peace Center  
215 E 14th Street  
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THE 2026 ANNUAL GATHERING OF IGNITE PEACE

**SAVE THE  
DATE**



Wednesday, October 21, 2026



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