



WV Criminal Law
Reform Coalition

EVENTS BRING JUSTICE-IMPACTED PEOPLE TO CHARLESTON, STATE LEGISLATURE NEXT WEEK

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. – As West Virginia’s crisis of overcrowded jails continues, several events are planned for next week for justice-impacted people to come together and make their voices heard at the West Virginia Legislature.

The West Virginia Family of Convicted People, Inc. (WVFCP) will host the **Rockin’ Recovery & Re-Entry Dance and Dinner 6-10 p.m. Monday, Feb. 21** at the **Loyal Order of Moose, 2805 Kanawha Blvd E.** The event will bring together justice-impacted people and their loved ones from across the state. Food and drinks will be served, with entertainment provided by DJ Rico Bradley.

The following morning, WVFCP will host a Justice-Impacted Policy Breakfast **6:45 to 8 a.m. at the Loyal Order of Moose.**

After the breakfast, a day of advocacy will be held at the Capitol, starting with a press conference and policy briefing in the Attorney General’s Little Rotunda. Legislators and media are encouraged to attend.

“Numerous bad bills which would increase incarceration have been introduced this session, as well as good bills that would ease barriers to reentry and recovery,” said **Lida Shepherd with the American Friends Service Committee**, “This is a chance for policymakers to hear from the people who understand the impacts these policies would have.”

After the breakfast, justice-impacted people will have the chance to observe Senate and House floor sessions and meet one-on-one with their representatives.

“Our regional jails are as overcrowded and dangerous as ever,” said **Greg Whittington, criminal legal reform campaign director at ACLU-WV.** “West Virginians with criminal convictions also struggle to find stability after incarceration, and people incarcerated are denied access to basic necessities.

“But the good news is that the movement for criminal law reform is growing in the Mountain State and we will make our voices heard,” he added.

WVFCP has also hired people in recovery to engage in daily phone-banking operations to help educate lawmakers about how proposed legislation will affect their ability to re-enter society.

They're also picking up an education themselves, said **Crystal Allen, WVFCP director of community organizing.**

"Civic engagement is a key component for successful re-entry," Allen said. "It makes people more invested in their communities and it helps them become empowered to change the system."

The West Virginia Criminal Law Reform Coalition includes WVFCP, ACLU-WV, American Friends Service Committee - WV, The Appalachian Prison Book Project, Jefferson County NAACP, Mountain State Justice, WV Center on Budget and Policy, The WV Council of Churches, WV Re-Entry Councils, and others.