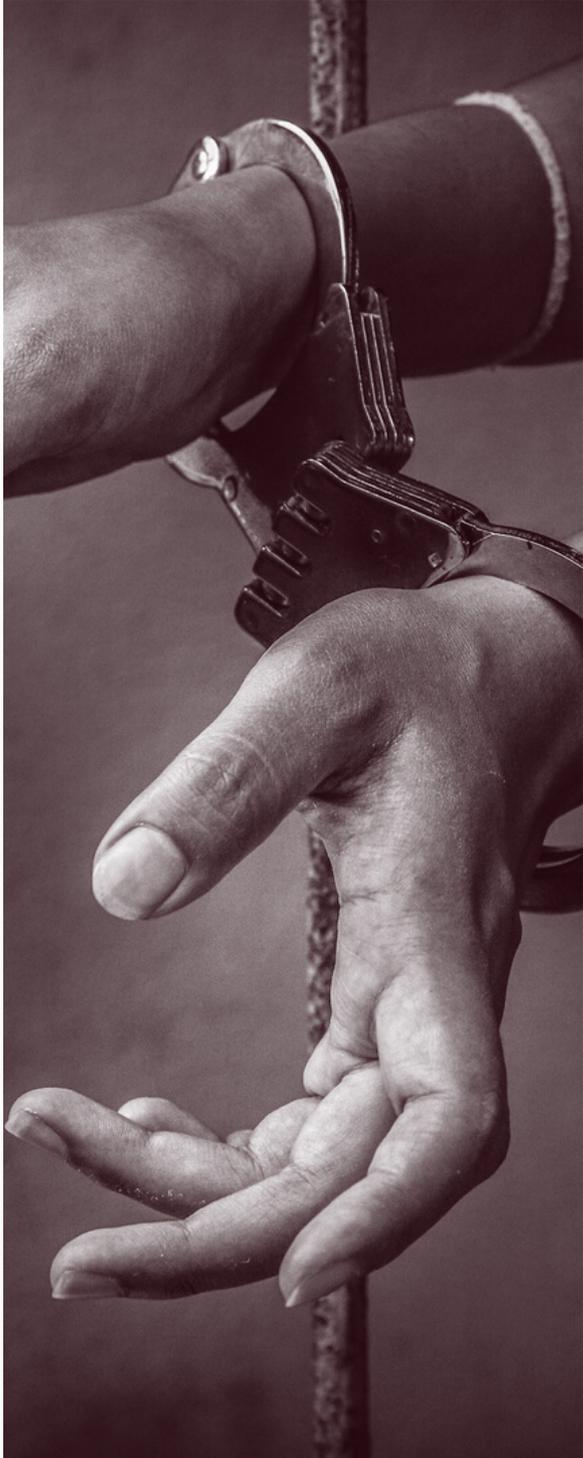




# U.S. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph Call for Change in the Cash Bail System

CORPORATE VOICE STATEMENT | JULY 2022



The U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph joins with The Bail Project to dismantle racism and eliminate the use of cash bail in the United States criminal legal system.

The original sin of this country is racism. The legacies of white supremacy, colonization, and slavery manifest in mass incarceration where Black and brown communities experience disproportionate arrest, conviction, and incarceration rates, including those who are jailed before trial.

Bail was originally utilized as a mechanism to ensure a person returns to their court hearing to face any charges. Today, cash bail has become a tool that penalizes people who lack wealth and reinforces racial biases, subjecting folks to languish in inhumane jail conditions.

As Shameka Parrish-Wright, The Bail Project's community advocacy and partnerships manager, notes, "The stakes are high. Cash bail is one of the key civil and racial justice issues of our day. That is why The Bail Project posts free bail for thousands of people in need every year, while also looking at the systemic level to effect meaningful change."

According to Prison Policy Initiative's most recent report, "Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie," more than 500,000 people are held in jail on any given night in the United States. Nearly two-thirds of those individuals are detained pretrial, despite being legally presumed innocent [1].

*continued next page*

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The U.S. Federation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph is a dynamic union of all the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the United States who claim a common origin in the foundation at LePuy, France in 1650. Today there are approximately 3,153 vowed members as well as 3,013 associates and 43 agrégées in the United States. Worldwide there are over 10,749 Sisters of Saint Joseph and 4,399 associates in over 50 countries.

Across the country, Black and brown defendants are at least 10-25% more likely than white defendants to be detained pretrial or to pay cash bail.

There has been a marked rise in the number of women held in local jails. Most of those women have experienced sexual violence, faced serious medical issues or substance abuse; they tend to also be primary caregivers to minor children [2]. Women — specifically women of color — face greater rates of detainment in jails, and confront a harmful system that exacerbates precarious economic, social, and psychological circumstances.

The Sisters of St. Joseph and their partners in mission throughout the country are called to confront racism and put our collective voice and financial power at the service of those who have experienced oppression — people who live in poverty, Black and brown communities, and women of color [3].

**We vow to use our Gospel mission of unifying love for the healing and transformation of the world to disrupt the cash bail system and seek holistic, gender-responsive reentry services for people impacted by incarceration.**

**FOOTNOTES**

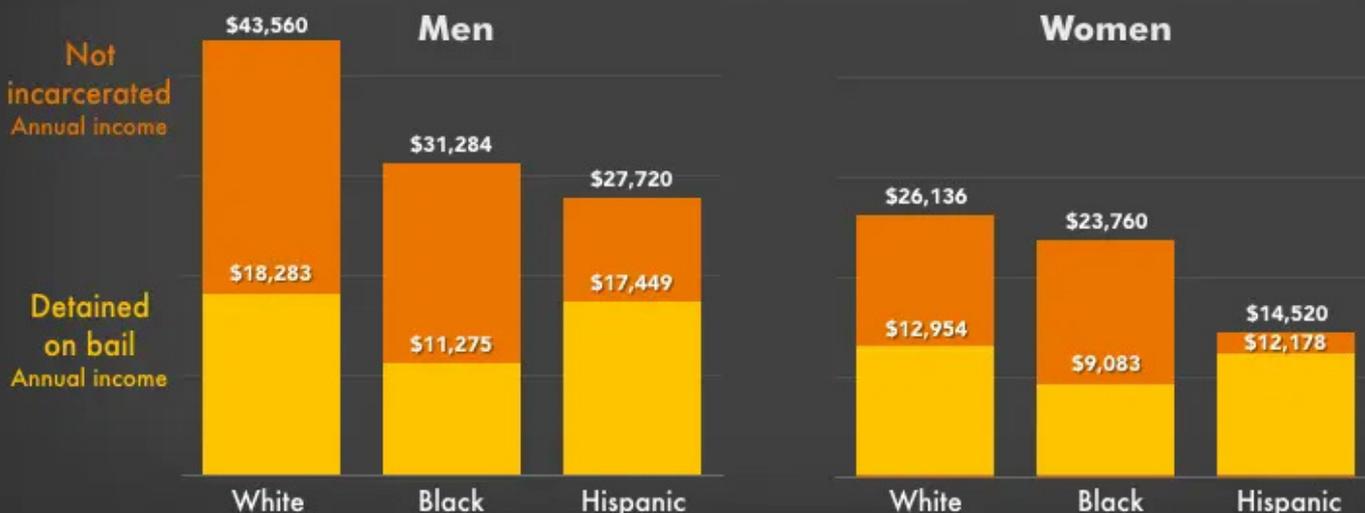
[1] See "The Whole Pie" 2022 Report here: <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2022.html> [https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/women\\_overtime.html](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/women_overtime.html)

[2] See data from Vera Institute for Justice's 2016 report: "Overlooked: Women and Jails in an Era of Reform," online: <https://www.vera.org/publication/overlooked-women-and-jails-report> as well Prison Policy Initiative's "Women's Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2019," and PPI's 2022 reporting on maternal incarceration: [https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2022/05/04/mothers\\_day/](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2022/05/04/mothers_day/) and pretrial detention [https://www.prisonpolicy.org/research/pretrial\\_detention/](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/research/pretrial_detention/)

[3] For the report on income and jails, see: <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/incomejails.html>

**People detained pretrial because they can't pay bail are much poorer than their peers - and the income gaps are widest for Black people**

Median annual pre-incarceration incomes (in 2015 dollars) for people ages 23-39 in local jails who were unable to post a bail bond, compared to incomes of same-age non-incarcerated people, by race/ethnicity and gender



For sourcing and data notes, see *Detaining the Poor* at [www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/incomejails.html](http://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/incomejails.html)



# CALLS TO ACTION



- **Support** a local or national bail fund 
- **Call** the Biden Administration to establish a reparations commission. View the sample script from NETWORK
- **Connect** with local organizations that support people impacted by incarceration and offer holistic reentry services
  - Keyway Center in St. Louis
  - New Hour for Women & Children — Long Island
  - The Bail Project — Local Coalitions
- **Learn** more about cash bail and pretrial detention:
  - "Detaining the Poor" report from Prison Policy Initiative
  - Diversion Programs
  - "What does successful bail reform look like? To start, look to Harris County, Texas" from Prison Policy Initiative
  - Women and Mass Incarceration



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