

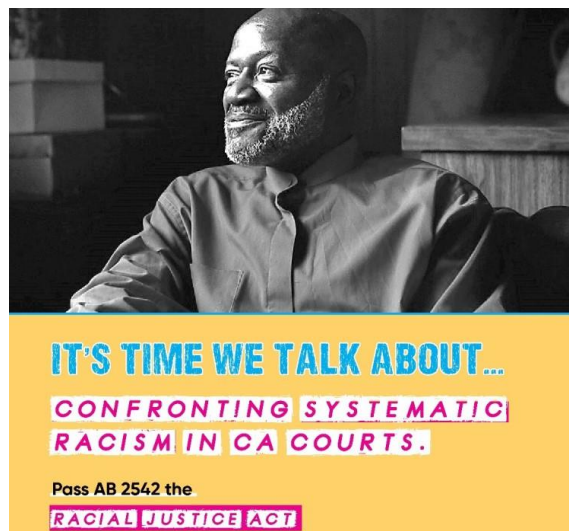


**American Friends
Service Committee**

AFSC West Region News – August 2020

Highlights of work from around the region

Welcome to the American Friends Service Committee's West Region monthly newsletter. We look forward to connecting with you regarding our shared work for peace and justice. Thanks for your interest and support; please send feedback to WestNews@afsc.org.



Healing Justice Program, Oakland

Your help needed to pass the Racial Justice Act in California

For far too long, pervasive, structural racism has led to unfair convictions and disproportionately long sentences for Black and Brown people. AB 2542, the **Racial Justice Act**, asserts civil rights in the courtroom and prohibits the state from using discriminatory means to seek or obtain a conviction or sentence. If you live in California, **contact your state senator now** to urge their support. If you live elsewhere, please forward this alert to your friends in CA and urge your own lawmakers to pass similar legislation.

Founded in 1917, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is an international Quaker organization that works on many social justice issues, including immigration, mass incarceration, youth civic engagement, and human rights in Palestine/Israel. With programs in 24 states and 15 countries, AFSC engages communities experiencing marginalization in the pursuit of shared security, based not on arms or coercion, but rather on creative nonviolence, sustainable economics and respect for all peoples.



Arizona Program, Tucson

Ballot initiative defeated, but WE ARE NOT

On August 20 we learned that the courts upheld the invalidation of citizen petition signatures by the Arizona Secretary of State and County Recorders, thereby removing the **Second Chances, Rehabilitation and Public Safety initiative** from the November ballot. This widely supported and much-needed citizens' initiative, which received more than 350,000 petition signatures, would have updated Arizona's decades-old sentencing and Earned Release Credit (ERC) structure and other draconian policies. Learn [**more**](#) about how our work for Second Chances will continue.



Two thousand people surround an ICE bus in Bend. Photo: Maxine Fookson

Project Voice Immigrant Rights Program, Oregon-Washington

Immigrant rights allies stand up for people detained in Bend

Pedro Sosa of AFSC shares this [**dramatic account**](#) of protesters surrounding a bus in Bend, Oregon to prevent ICE from detaining two people from the community. Pat Rumer, an AFSC volunteer and blogger, [**shares**](#) these questions from a local pastor: "Why were Border Patrol agents in full riot gear showing up to break up a peaceful crowd protecting the two immigrants on an ICE bus? Why are they so abundantly resourced, while our schools struggle to have enough money to educate the children?" Pedro adds, "There's nothing better than [**knowing your rights**](#) and exercising them."



Farm to Foodbank program. Photo: Core-Visual

People of the Land Program, Albuquerque

Farm to Foodbank program keeps growing

Since March, support from the AFSC community has helped us connect small-scale **farmers with food banks** struggling to meet rising need — providing nearly 7,000 pounds of local produce to thousands of community members. One Albuquerque farmer told us: “If I didn’t have AFSC’s Farm to Food Bank to sell my produce to, I may not have farmed this season. I lost most of my restaurants and farmer’s markets because of the pandemic. I was able to continue to employ two workers this season at living wages thanks to AFSC’s program. It’s been a life saver.” Support the effort **here**.



Rally and march to shut down Otay Mesa. Photo: Pedro Rios

US-Mexico Border Program, San Diego

Growing call to shutter immigrant detention centers

AFSC recently supported a rally and march calling for shutting down the Otay Mesa Detention Center, where ICE contracts with CoreCivic to detain migrants and where US Marshals deprive people of their liberty. The march called for abolishing the punishment state. Organizations throughout California participated in this statewide action and others. Follow **AFSC San Diego on Instagram** for more.



Economic Activism Program, Oakland

AFSC calls for a boycott of Pillsbury

Pillsbury, owned by General Mills, manufactures frozen baked goods in an illegal Israeli settlement in the occupied Palestinian territory – violating international law and contributing to gross human rights abuses, write Dalit Baum and Noam Perry of AFSC. Among other steps, people are urged to [contact the CEO of General Mills using our online form](#). Tell the company to uphold its expressed commitment to human rights and stop doing business in illegal settlements.



Photo: Pedro Rios

Immigrant Rights Program, Denver

Standing up for asylum seekers

AFSC recently assisted U.S. Rep. Diana DeGette in [collecting dozens of stories](#) of immigrants who've fled to the Denver area for their safety. "I was afraid for my life and for the lives of my children," wrote one person connected with AFSC. "If I died, who would my children stay with?" [Take action now](#) to let your members of Congress know that they should defund the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), protect asylum seekers and oppose further restrictions.



Alejandra Matias is a DACA recipient from Oakland.

67 Sueños, Oakland

Take action to support DACA recipients and undocumented youth

Alejandra Matias from Oakland is one of hundreds of thousands of people with DACA who continue to be threatened by the Trump Administration's actions against the program. "Having DACA gave me opportunities and opened doors for me," Alejandra shares in this [video from 67 Sueños](#). "My family brought me because they wanted a better life for me here." **Take action** to call on the administration to halt any enforcement activities against DACA recipients and undocumented young people and cease all attacks on the DACA program. Applications will be accepted until September 18 for a [lead organizer position](#) with 67 Sueños.



Working the compost bins at the South LA community farm.

Roots for Peace Program, Los Angeles

Engaging young people during the pandemic

Youth connected with AFSC have been making soil from food waste at the South LA community farm. Check out [Roots for Peace on Instagram](#) for a video (in Spanish) of Blanca, community compost leader, who is supporting Roots for Peace alumni to work the bins. We appreciate her support and the *apoyo* from Paola from [@lacompost](#)! We're finding ways people can get involved during this pandemic and prioritizing youth.



Graciela Martinez. Photo by Eduardo Stanley

Pan Valley Institute (PVI), Fresno

Graciela Martinez leaves a legacy of work for justice

Myrna Martinez of PVI shares news of the August 1 passing of Graciela Martinez, who spent 30 years “shaping the AFSC story with her dedication to justice for farmworkers, immigrants and all people in this region.” Read about her life in the [Visalia Times Delta](#) and the [Fresno Alliance](#).



Short takes

Save October 4 on your calendar to help [celebrate Laura Magnani](#) (above), who’s retiring after 30 years of groundbreaking work with the California Healing Justice Program....Check out [AFSC’s support of Prison Free Funds](#), which helps investors divest from companies that profit from the prison industrial complex....AFSC has signed this [open letter to progressives](#) asking them to drop the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) as an ally in social justice work.

Your support matters

Your gifts of time and money make a real difference. Please be in touch with any West Region program by visiting [afsc.org](#), and support the AFSC West Region by [donating](#) today. Please share this subscription [link](#) for this newsletter with others. Thank you!