

OPPORTUNITY & PROSPERITY FOR ALL

Fair Chance

The FAIR CHANCE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROJECT partners with impacted people, congregations, concerned community members, advocacy organizations, and decision-makers to make a fairer criminal justice system, from arrest to reentry.

#END PERPETUAL PUNISHMENT



OUR WORK, OUR IMPACT:

Our core goals are to improve the procedures, practices, and policies of the criminal justice system so people are treated more fairly and to ensure people exiting the criminal justice system can successfully reintegrate into their families and communities.

- Through lobbying and community engagement, helped ensure the passage of the **Second Chance Act**, which drastically expands access to criminal record expungement relief and is arguably the most progressive bill passed by the North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA) in decades.
- Through lobbying and community engagement, helped ensure the passage of the **Expunction Expansion Act**, which expanded eligibility to allow for multiple felony convictions to be expunged after the approximate waiting period.
- Partnered with district attorneys in Durham, Mecklenburg, New Hanover, Pitt, Pender, Rockingham, and Caswell Counties to **eliminate more than \$5 million in long-term traffic debt** for more than 25,000 people. Sixteen additional jurisdictions have also completed district attorney-initiated relief programs.
- Developed and maintained www.resolvetrafficdebtnc.org, an information and resources website with over 60,000 individual visitors seeking to prevent or overcome debt-based driver's license suspension. Since the website launched in March 2022, over 60,000 people have visited it.
- Co-hosted the **Annual Vigil for Freedom and Racial Justice**, a month-long

THE PROJECT'S WORK CONSISTS OF:

(1) identifying unfair policies and practices used by public and private institutions to exclude people with criminal records from essential opportunities and resources; (2) facilitating high-quality dialogue among and between directly-impacted people, decision-makers, and other stakeholders regarding the devastating impact of these barriers to prosperity on individuals, families, and communities; (3) identifying and raising awareness of best practices, programs, and policies; and (4) providing research and technical assistance to private and public decision-makers throughout the consideration, adoption, and implementation of reforms to ensure relief reaches communities experiencing inequitable systems.



advocacy event launched in December 2020. The annual vigil has promoted statewide awareness of the impacts of the modern-day carceral system and has led to Governor Cooper exercising his power to grant clemency to deserving North Carolina residents each year.

- **Led the virtual community education component** of the vigil by planning and executing eight community conversations about the modern-day carceral system. View the [conversations](#) here.
- **Published the report “Nothing to do with Grace, Nothing to do with Justice,”** describing the policy, practices, and human impacts of the North Carolina Unauthorized Substances Tax.
- **Provided research, technical support, and funding** for the creation of Second Chance Wilmington, a dedicated program in Wilmington, NC, that provides expunction and driver’s license restoration services to Wilmington residents.

MOVING FORWARD

Ensure people with criminal records can access resources and opportunities that promote successful reentry.

- Work with statewide partners to advocate for adequate public funding of community-based reentry services and support for the expansion and maintenance of local reentry councils.
- Advocate to end debt-based driver’s license suspension through community education and coordination with district attorneys, relevant state agencies, impacted people, and the NCGA.



- Increase access to expunction and certificate of relief opportunities in collaboration with local court officials and advocates. Advance legislation expanding eligibility for criminal record expungement, improving the effectiveness of the process, including through expunction automation.
- Advocate to eliminate solitary confinement, improve access to health care and mental health treatment of incarcerated individuals, and increase prison programs supporting reentry prior to release. Advocate for improved policy and

practice around medical/compassionate release for elderly and ill incarcerated people.

- Promote the adoption of fair chance policies for housing and employment. Highlight fair housing practices and policies through community education and outreach events, and provide support for community-based housing advocacy groups. Advocate for fair chance employment policies and practices for private-sector, state, county, and local jobs.



- Ensure recent Occupational Licensing law is being implemented and allies and Second Chance Alliance partners know and understand the expanded rights of individuals with a criminal record.
- Eliminate the North Carolina Unauthorized Substances Tax (the “Drug Tax”) by helping draft and advance a bill eliminating the tax and terminating any outstanding tax liability.
- Limit exploitive use of mug shots, and promote legislation that limits the use of mug shots in coalition with conservative groups.

LET’S WORK TOGETHER to end poverty, build power, and share prosperity across North Carolina!



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