

Amistad Law Project

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://amistadlaw.org/prosecutor-accountability-and-just-policies>

Campaign and Advocacy

In recent years, District Attorneys in Pennsylvania have begun to talk about reform. In response, we've formulated model policies for 'progressive prosecutors'. And we've lifted up the voices of people harmed by the legal system in the process. After District Attorney Larry Krasner was elected in Philadelphia, we led dialogues with incarcerated people and their families. Out of these dialogues we formulated policy suggestions by people most harmed by the criminal legal system.

The Philadelphia District Attorney's office adopted some of these suggestions including a dedicated and fair process to recommend people for commutation at the Board of Pardons. The Conviction Integrity Unit is not limited to innocence claims, but also takes on cases of excessive sentencing. Importantly, District Attorney Krasner has advocated for a change in law that would allow lifers parole review.

We've continued this work with other district attorneys in the counties outside of Philadelphia. We've communicated model policy suggestions on how their offices could weigh in on the commutation process at the Board of Pardons. Subsequently, in some cases we've seen those offices take meaningful action to recommend rehabilitated individuals for clemency.

Additionally, we hold elected officials accountable. When Delaware County DA, Jack Stollsteimer, who ran as a 'reform prosecutor' attempted to shield police from accountability by charging two Black teens with first degree murder for a killing the cops had committed, we supported local organizers in demanding justice.

We are always looking for opportunities to work with new administrations of progressive prosecutors. We know that progressive prosecutors can't end mass incarceration but they can lead to meaningful change for people caught up in the criminal legal system. We use these opportunities to highlight the voices of people harmed by the criminal legal system to achieve reforms which bring people home from prisons.

