

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/research/chicago-ideas-designed-to-dehumanize>

Policy Issue Resources

The Vera Institute of Justice teamed up with Chicago Ideas to envision the American prison system, and imagine a society in which prisons serve as rehabilitation facilities for communities and citizens, rather than as crippling institutions. The event combined performance, first-person testimony, and compelling dialogue that all looked into not only how the American prison system can cause civil death, but also what everyday citizens can do to help reshape the way in which incarceration affects the country.

Part One: Designed to Dehumanize This portion consisted of a dramatic reading that placed the American prison system and the experiences of incarcerated people into historical context, underscoring how incarceration is a form of never-ending punishment for millions of people who are penalized long after their release.

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Launched as part of Prison Visiting Week for Veras Reimagining Prison initiative, this explainer video focuses on alternative approaches to incarceration in use by countries such as Germany. Comparatively, tough on crime practices in the U.S. have been ineffective. We spend \$80 billion on incarceration per year, yet more than half the people who ...

Vera @ Chicago Ideas - Part II

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Lifting a nearly 30-year ban on Pell Grants for people who are incarcerated, Congress passed the FAFSA Simplification Act, which restores their Pell Grant eligibility starting in 2023, allowing them to affordably pursue postsecondary education in prison. The Second Chance Pell (SCP) Experiment has highlighted the success of prison education program ...

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