

Amistad Law Project

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

[**https://amistadlaw.org/holding-judges-accountable**](https://amistadlaw.org/holding-judges-accountable)

Campaign and Advocacy

Much attention has been paid to the role of prosecutors in driving mass incarceration. Yet the role of the judges in putting countless human beings in prison often escapes the same level of scrutiny. And Judicial races often go on without much civic engagement.

To remedy this, Amistad Law Project helped co-found the Judge Accountability Table along with other movement partners. This coalition of Philadelphia-based organizations shines a light on what happens in the courts. In 2019, the Judge Accountability Table held the largest judicial candidate forum and organized people harmed by the criminal legal system to ask questions of the candidates. From 2019-2021 our Policy Director Nikki Grant played the role of Court Watch Coordinator within the coalition. Over the course of the height of the pandemic in 2020, court watch volunteers organized by Nikki and others with the Judge Accountability Table observed over 800 hearings, many of which were for people fighting to get out of jail because of health conditions that made them especially vulnerable to COVID-19.

In order to focus on our longterm work to bring people home sentenced to death by incarceration and other longterm sentences we stepped back from an active role in the Judge Accountability Table in the fall of 2021. We are proud to have played a foundational role in fostering and building this important project.

Mass incarceration is a set of interlocking social policies. At Amistad Law Project, we intend to dismantle every piece of this machinery. We know that we can build a new justice paradigm rooted in transformation and healing justice not retribution.

