

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.acluohio.org/en/news/we-all-make-mistakes-some-us-pay-them-rest-our-lives>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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On Saturday, November 2, 2013 a coalition of faith groups, unions, professional associations, community groups, and rights organizations (including the ACLU of Ohio) will hold a rally at the Ohio Statehouse. At this rally, we will call on Ohio lawmakers to halt the death penalty, end the war on drugs and the epidemic of mass incarceration, break the many reentry barriers for the formerly incarcerated, and put a stop to "stand your ground" proposals in Ohio.

*In advance of the rally, the ACLU of Ohio will be blogging about each of these four important issues. In this post, staff member **Melissa Bilancini** writes about barriers faced by returning citizens.*

That scarlet F that felony conviction creates a stigma that formerly incarcerated individuals are bad people. It also creates barriers that folks must overcome in order to lead successful lives.

To start, let's get something straight. I am not championing the dissolution of the criminal justice system. However, given the [significant problems](#) that Ohio has with over incarceration, we need to have a real conversation as a community about what to do about Ohio's felony factories.

This conversation must begin with the recognition that we all make mistakes.

Next, we must recognize that we cannot continue to punish those who have paid their debts to society.

These punishments come in many forms.

Though individuals with felony convictions

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