

GLOSSARY: JUSTICE SYSTEM TERMS

Mass Incarceration : “Mass incarceration is a massive system of racial and social control. It is the process by which people are swept into the criminal justice system, branded criminals and felons, locked up for longer periods of time than most other countries in the world who incarcerate people who have been convicted of crimes, and then released into a permanent second-class status in which they are stripped of basic civil and human rights, like the right to vote, the right to serve on juries, and the right to be free of legal discrimination in employment, housing, access to public benefits...It is a system that operates to control people, often at early ages, and virtually all aspects of their lives after they have been viewed as suspects in some kind of crime.” – Michelle Alexander¹⁴

School-to-Prison Pipeline : This phrase refers to the national trend whereby children are “funneled out of public schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems.” Many of these students have learning disabilities or come from environments characterized by poverty, abuse, or neglect.

Jail versus Prison : A **jail** is a facility that houses three types of incarcerated people: 1) people who have been arrested and are being held before a plea agreement, trial, or sentencing, 2) people who have been convicted of a *misdemeanor* criminal offense and are serving a sentence of less than 1 year, and 3) people who have been sentenced to prison and are about to be transferred to another facility. A **prison**, on the other hand, is a facility that houses people who have been convicted of a felony criminal offense and are serving a sentence of 1 year or more. Whereas jails are operated by a county or city government, prisons are operated by a state government or the federal government.

Pretrial Detention : Pretrial detention refers to the detaining of an accused person in a criminal case before the trial has taken place either because the accused person has failed to post bail or because he or she has been denied release under a pre-trial detention statute (ie: Bail Reform Act of 1984 authorizes a judge to detain a federal criminal defendant if the judge has reasonable doubt that the defendant will appear at trial, or if the judge believes the defendant will cause harm to the community).

Solitary Confinement : Solitary confinement is the isolation of an incarcerated person in a separate cell as a form of punishment. A federal inspector general’s report determined that “isolation can cause anxiety, depression, anger, paranoia, and disturbances among prisoners” and those who have been held in solitary are “more likely to be repeat offenders and have problems integrating back into their communities.”

Clemency : The President and state governors possess the power of executive clemency, which enables them to pardon offenses or reduce the sentences of people with federal or state criminal convictions. A pardon will erase the criminal record and restore the returning citizen’s civil rights. A commutation of sentence shortens the sentence to allow for early or immediate release.

Parole : Parole refers to the decision to release an incarcerated individual from a confinement facility prior to the expiration of his or her sentence on the condition that the individual continue to be monitored and remain in compliance with certain terms and conditions for a specified period of time. For more information on the system of parole in Connecticut, check out [Life on Parole](#) , a documentary that follows four formerly incarcerated individuals during their first year on parole.

Probation : Probation, like parole, is an alternative to incarceration, and the individual on probation is expected to follow certain rules and guidelines. However, while parole is an early release from prison, probation occurs prior to—and often in place of—prison time.

Collateral Consequences: The various consequences which are beyond the terms of the conviction under federal and state laws, but not intended by the judge while convicting. For example, disenfranchisement, disqualification of education loans, loss of professional licenses, or eviction from public housing are the collateral consequences attached with the conviction for felony.

Recidivism: The rate at which formerly incarcerated individuals encounter the justice system again. In some studies, violating parole, breaking the law, getting arrested, being convicted of a crime, and returning to prison are all considered examples of recidivism. Other studies count just one or two of these events as recidivism, such as convictions or re-incarceration. Recidivism is NOT a return to “criminal behavior”, nor is it caused by any single factor. Concurrently, no one factor goes into reducing recidivism, as that would underplay the structural layers at play that contribute to a return to incarceration.

WORDS TO AVOID

WORDS TO USE INSTEAD

Ex-offender; Ex-inmate; Ex-felon; Ex-convict; Ex-con; Ex-prisoner

Individual, person, man, woman with prior or current justice system involvement; Justice-involved individual; Formerly incarcerated individual Returning citizen; People affected by the justice system

Inmate; Prisoner

Person that is currently incarcerated; Incarcerated individual,

Convict; Offender; Felon; Criminal; Delinquent; Juvenile Delinquent; Juvenile Offender

Incarcerated individual, person, man, or woman; Justice-involved individual, person, man, or woman

Defendant

Individual accused of a crime

Dangerous Neighborhood

Communities experiencing high levels of violence

Parolee; Probationer; Detainee

Person on parole; Person on probation; Person in detention

Illegal immigrant

Undocumented Immigrant; Immigrant without papers;

Homeless people

Persons or people experiencing homelessness

Drug Addict

A person experiencing an alcohol/drug addiction, with an addictive disease; person who suffers/suffered with addiction

Clean/Sober/Staying Clean

in recovery, addiction-free, addiction survivor, in remission, maintaining recovery, wellness,, substance-free

Crazy;; insane; psycho; mentally ill; emotionally disturbed;

Person living with a mental health illness;

SOURCES

<https://www.aclu.org/issues/juvenile-justice/school-prison-pipeline>

<http://cleminfostrategies.com/whats-the-difference-between-prison-and-jail/>

<https://definitions.uslegal.com/p/pre-trial-detention/>

<http://www.ctbailfund.org/>

<https://ctmirror.org/2017/08/07/ct-civil-rights-panel-seeks-greater-protections-on-solitary-confinement/>

<https://www.cjpf.org/clemency/>

<https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=qa&iid=324>