

## City Startup Labs – Beyond Second Chances



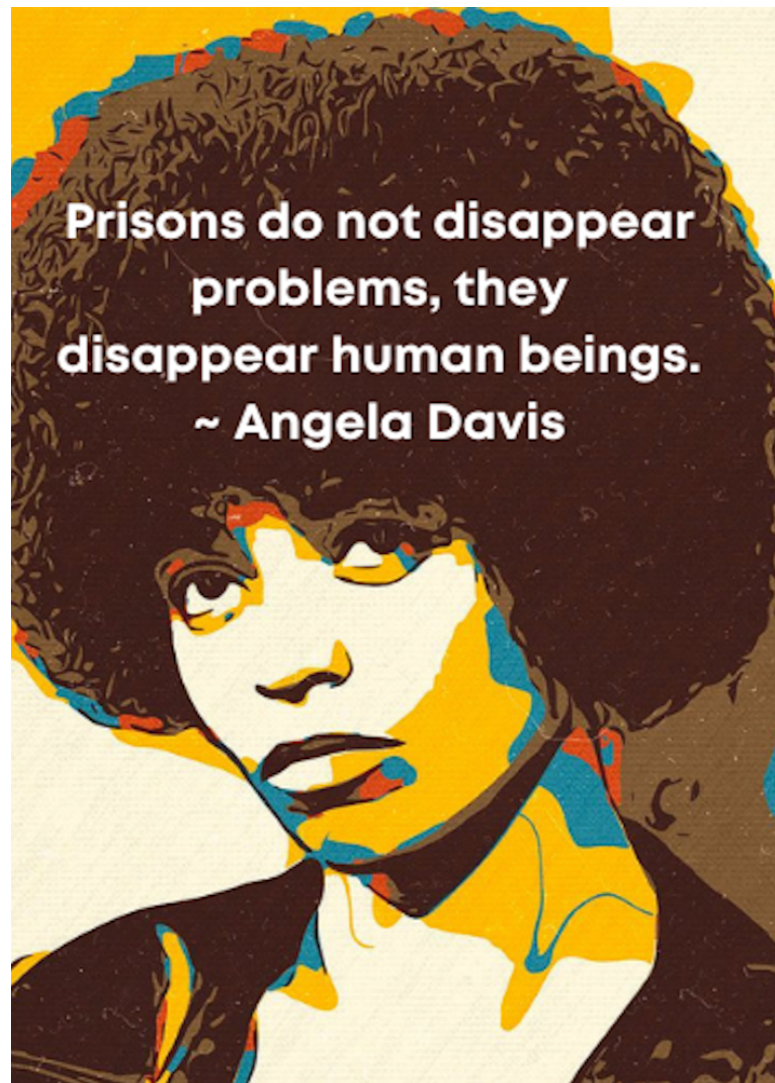
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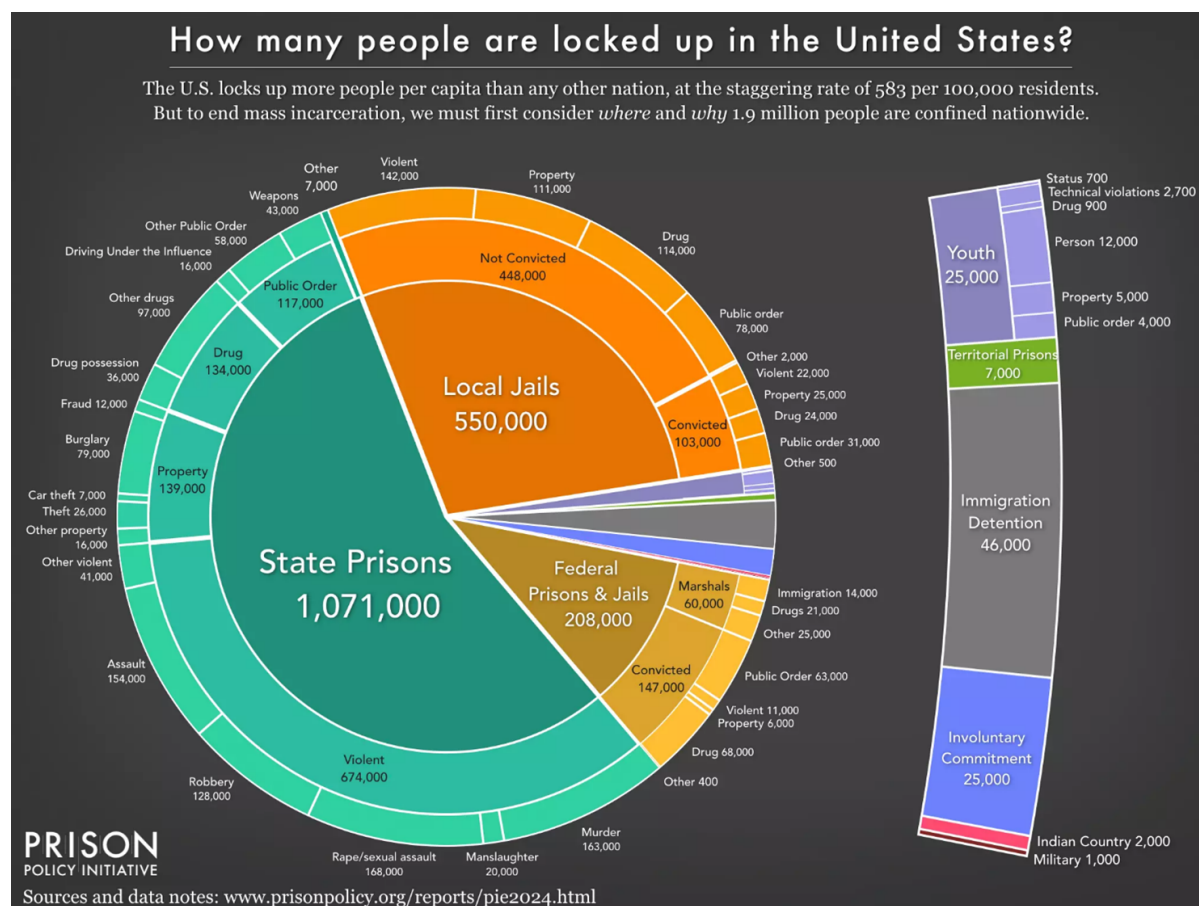
## BEYOND SECOND CHANCES



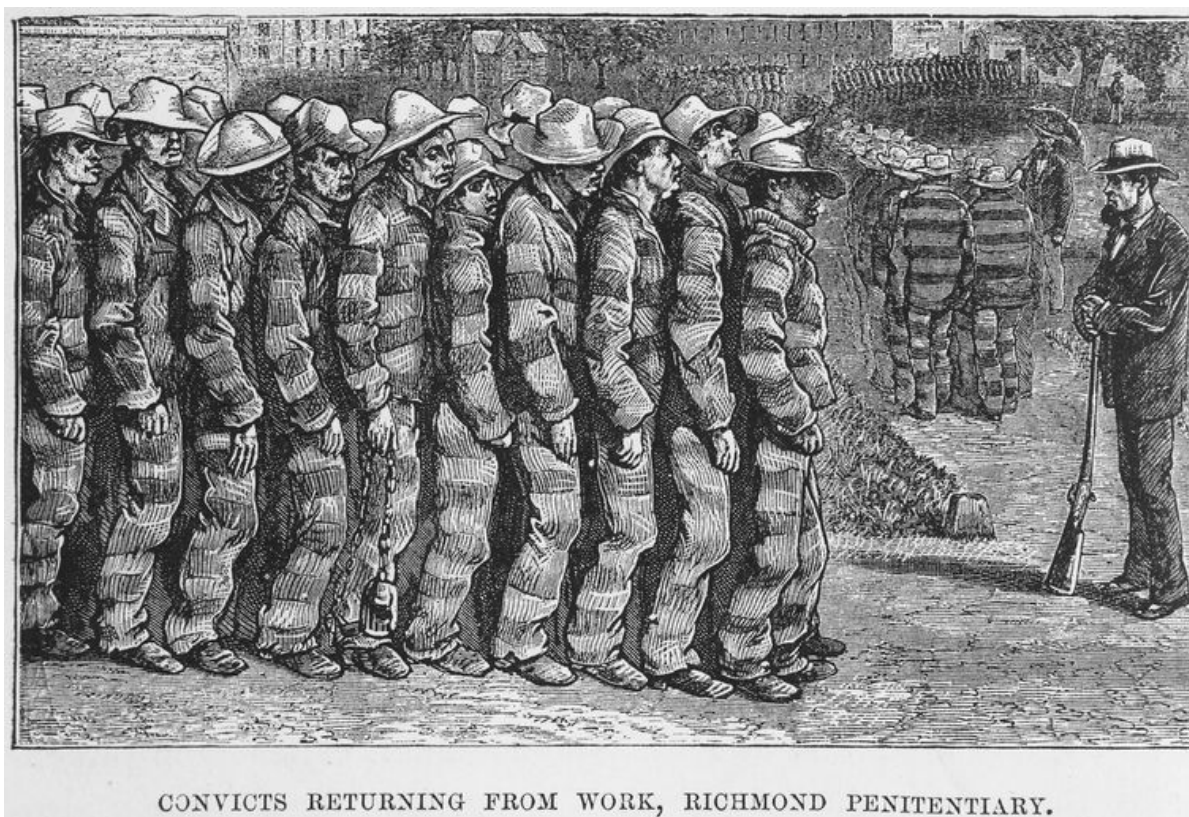
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### Part I – The Prisoner Reentry Industry

As we come to the end of Second Chance Month – initiated in 2017 by the [Prison Fellowship](#), it should be noted that the United States has the highest rate of incarceration in the world. China - a "non-democratic" country with a population of 1.4 billion is often chided by others, particularly in the US for its human rights abuses - ranks a distant 2nd.



According to the [Prison Policy Initiative](#), across the United States nearly 2 million people are imprisoned in 1,566 state and 98 federal prisons, 3,116 local jails, 1,323 juvenile correctional facilities, 142 immigration detention facilities, and 80 Indian country jails, as well as in military prisons, civil commitment centers, state psychiatric hospitals, and prisons in the U.S. territories – a rate of 664 people per 100,000 and a number equivalent to roughly 25% of the world's total prison population.  
[[Census of State and Federal Adult Correctional Facilities, 2019](#)]





The roots of this carceral state in America were crystalized with the nation's "[peculiar institution](#)", codified in the [13th Amendment](#) and fortified by the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. The Clinton Crime Bill ratcheted up a trend towards mass incarceration that started with the "War on Drugs". The biggest crime bill in US history allocated federal funds for up to 75% of the cost of new prisons (\$9.7 billion in funding for prisons *designed with significant input* from experienced police officers), included a three-strikes provision addressing repeat offenders, defined 60 new capital offenses, overturned a section of the Higher Education Act of 1965 permitting prison inmates to receive a Pell Grant for higher education while they were incarcerated (see [College Behind Bars](#)) and introduced 100,000 more police officers.

*Clinton stated then, "we will fight crime by putting 100,000 new police officers on the streets. We will create a National Police Corps and offer unemployed veterans and active military personnel a chance to become law enforcement officers at home. We will also expand community policing, fund more drug treatment, and establish community boot camps to discipline first-time non-violent offenders."*





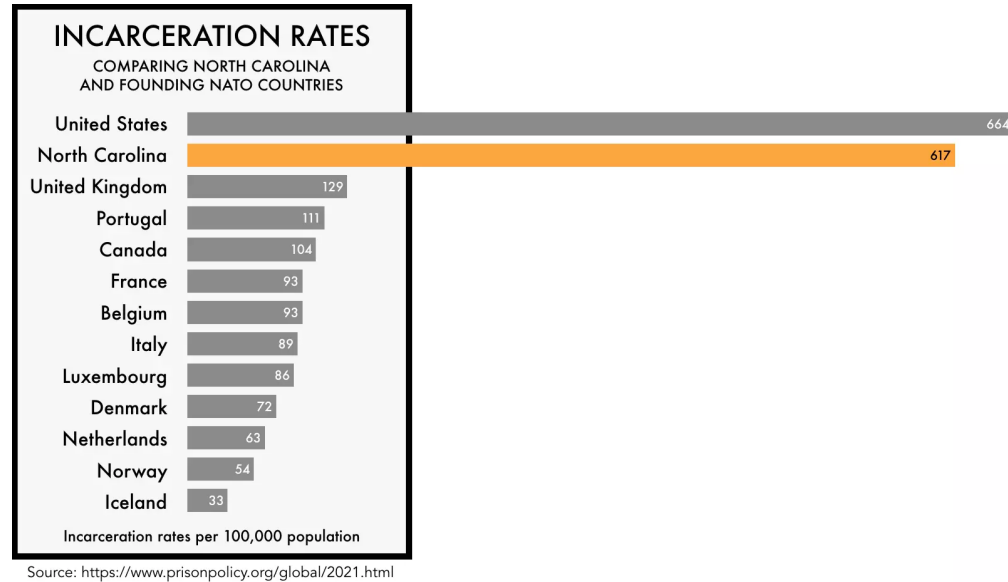
While there was support from the Congressional Black Caucus for an immediate response to the crime, violence and the influx of drugs into Black communities, there was a call for something different than just a crime bill. The caucus put forward the Racial Justice Act – which acknowledged tough sentencing and police protection paired with calls for full employment, investments in quality education and drug prevention and treatment, alternatives to incarceration, early intervention programs and criticism of police brutality. However, when it was all said and done, less than a quarter of the funding went to prevention and rehabilitation programs, instead the bill further entrenched the idea that vulnerable urban communities are best managed through harsh punishment and heightened surveillance.

According to a study in *The Prison Journal*, entitled **The System Is Not Broken, It Is Intentional** [Ortiz & Jackey, 2019] – *The Prisoner Reentry Industry (PRI)* emerged as a by-product of mass incarceration, with the stated purpose of helping formerly incarcerated individuals reintegrate into society and achieve a new "law-abiding" status.

This was exemplified in 2007 when Congress passed the Second Chance Act (SCA), a bill aimed at improving prisoner reentry programming by issuing federal reentry grants. However, the SCA proved to be mostly symbolic because it lacked substantive funding and merely helped the state extend its presence in those same vulnerable communities.



At last week's [2024 NC Rehabilitation and Reentry Conference](#) in Raleigh, North Carolina, **PRI** was on display over the 2½ days - from Governor Cooper's keynote, on the heels of his [Executive Order No. 303](#), to the heart-felt testimonials about the power of redemption and rehabilitation, to the earnest non-profits organizations (ours included) and market-ready for-profit vendors — *reentry is indeed an industry*.



It should be noted that North Carolina's rate of incarceration stands out within the US and globally.

However, it's now time for us to reimagine the business of reentry, which we'll explore in **Part II of Beyond Second Chances**.



With gratitude,

*Henry Rock*



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