

September 23, 2021

Addressed to:

Susan Rice
Director of the Domestic Policy Council

Janet Yellen
Secretary of the Treasury

Shalanda Young
Director of Office of Management and Budget

We, the undersigned organizations and investors, are writing to express grave concern at a dangerous precedent being set in the State of Alabama, with national implications. They are proposing use of federal COVID-19 relief and infrastructure funds to construct prisons. If permitted to proceed, we believe a disturbing standard for the use of these funds will be set, enabling (and encouraging) other states to follow suit. Moreover, it will result in vital relief and infrastructure projects in Alabama and across the nation to remain unaddressed.

We ask the Biden Administration to explicitly prohibit any state, including Alabama, from using CARES Act, American Rescue Plan (ARP), infrastructure funds or any other federal dollars for prison construction projects. Aid should be allocated to communities in greatest need centering Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities who have been disproportionately affected by the crushing impacts of COVID-19 to ensure widespread and regenerative economic prosperity.

If permitted to use federal dollars, the State will squander a once-in-a-generation opportunity to invest in our communities for productive infrastructure like K-12 and early childhood education, access to high quality and affordable healthcare, clean water and sanitation, as well as promoting a green economy through the transition to renewable energy sources. Investors have proven they are not interested in economic growth based on mass incarceration and would be far more willing to support economic growth sustaining and vitalizing communities.

We vehemently oppose the construction of prisons that will continue to brutalize Black and brown bodies. Investors will gladly and publicly support efforts by Alabama or any other state intent on promoting economic and environmental justice.

Furthermore, in 2020, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) filed a lawsuit against the State of Alabama and the Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC) regarding persistent, unconstitutionally “cruel and unusual” conditions in Alabama’s prison system for men¹ after

¹ [“Justice Department Files Lawsuit Against the State of Alabama for Unconstitutional Conditions in State’s Prisons for Men,”](#) from the DOJ Office of Public Affairs (December 9, 2020).

finding rampant corruption, mismanagement, violence, and abuse.² To date, no actions have been taken to alleviate the aforementioned violations.

The people of Alabama and communities whose governments use federal dollars to expand mass incarceration are engaging in a zero-sum game that perpetuates and exacerbates decades of under-investment in health care, child care, affordable housing, and public services and creates a drag on the economy. As an example, given the dramatic recent increase in the number of people infected with COVID, Alabama reported that it has -29 intensive care unit beds “available” statewide as of September 14th. Alabama’s priorities should be on spending \$700 million on the health and well-being of its residents, not on building more prisons. Residents of Alabama need relief and demand regenerative investment that maximizes economic opportunity for all.

We ask the Biden Administration to be unequivocal: NO state, including Alabama, should be permitted to use CARES Act, American Rescue Plan (ARP), infrastructure funds, or any other federal dollars for prison construction projects. Aid should be allocated to explicitly center and uplift widespread economic prosperity, with a specific focus on historically-excluded Black, Brown and Indigenous communities.

Respectfully,

The Ordinary People’s Society
Adelante Alabama Worker Center
Alabama Appleseed Center for Law and Justice
Justice Capital
Adasina Social Capital
Eric Glass
Zevin Wealth Management
Bronze Investments
SURJ
Candide Group
The Big We Foundation
Presente.org
American Sustainable Business Council
Social Venture Circle
Nathan Cummings Foundation
The People’s Advocacy Institute
Worth Rises
Full Spectrum Capital Partners
Andrea Zucker
Boston Common Asset Management
Impact Capital Strategies

² “[Justice Department Alleges Conditions in Alabama Men’s Prisons Violate the Constitution](#),” from the DOJ Office of Public Affairs (April 3, 2019).

Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility
Harkins Wealth Management
Lauren Martin
Good Capital Investment Group
Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill Philadelphia
De-Carceration Fund
Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids
Region VI Coalition for Responsible Investment
KNGDM Group
NorthStar Asset Management, Inc.
45North Partners
Neva Goodwin
Graustein Memorial Fund
The Impact Investors
Domini Impact Investments, LLC
Transform Finance
Trillium Asset Management, LLC
Responsible Business Initiative
Reynders, McVeigh Capital Management
Southern Poverty Law Center Action Fund
Communities Not Prisons
Dana Bronfman
Terra Blue Wealth Management
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
Grace Chai
Marguerite Casey Foundation
Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation
The Libra Foundation
Kevin P Carbin, JR.
Resource Generation
Karen Baldwin
Diana Irene Boeke
Izzy Snyder
Michael Pellman Rowland
Maggie Davies
Chad & Tenah Dyer
Fight Toxic Prisons
Stuart McCalla
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
SharePower Responsible Investing
Change Finance
Province of Saint Joseph of the Capuchin Order
Butler Family Fund
Andrus Family Fund

Intentional Endowments Network
Implementation Allies
Ibis Communications
Green Retirement, Inc.
Community Benefit Corporation
Stakeholders Capital
Inspired Collaborations
SVT Group
Verus Corporation
Toniic
The 22 Fund
Eastman Dryden Blessman Company
Subtle Energetics
JSA Sustainable Wealth Management
O³
Borealis Philanthropy
Rachel Herzing
Allister Byrd
Integrated Capital Investing
Constance Wilsen
joyce shiffrin
Fundors for Justice
Grantmakers for Southern Progress
ash jones
S Jaquelyn Rieke
The Elmore Bolling Initiative
SRI Investing LLC
Dana Investment Advisors
Investor Advocates for Social Justice
Impact Investors, Inc.
We Are Stardust LP