

# ABOUT SURJ & PJALS

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SURJ (**Showing Up for Racial Justice**) is a national, chapter-based organization that works to help build a racially just society through undermining white support for white supremacy. The Spokane chapter of SURJ operates as a committee of the **Peace & Justice Action League of Spokane** (PJALS) and this summer, we are reaching out to the community at large to engage more folks in this important work. You can read here about some of the many opportunities to show up for racial justice in our own backyard.

SURJ meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of every month at 5:30 PM at the Community Building (35 West Main Ave Spokane, WA 99201)

Find out more at [www.pjals.org](http://www.pjals.org) and [www.showingupforracialjustice.org](http://www.showingupforracialjustice.org).

# NO NEW JAIL

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Communities of color, those living in poverty, and our neighbors with mental illness, addiction, and disabilities are hardest hit by mass incarceration. Incarceration hurts people, families, and communities. Spokane County policies have created the crisis of over-incarceration and extreme racial disparities in the Spokane County Jail.

Our community rejected the idea of a large new jail eight years ago. County Commissioners have failed to finish promised changes to reduce jail population and address systemic racism. We are members of the Smart Justice Spokane coalition working on this issue.

Now, some of the County Commissioners want to build a new bigger jail to incarcerate more of our families and neighbors at huge public expense--even though jail is proven to be the most expensive and least effective way to deter crime, change behavior, and support recovery.

We know that people of color, specifically African Americans and Native Americans, are being stopped, questioned, and arrested at disproportionate rates in our community. We also know that the jail population in Spokane has been consistent in its hyper-incarceration of African American and Native American people. There is no reason to believe that this trend would change with a larger jail.

In 2017, the MacArthur Foundation awarded Spokane County \$1,000,000+ to reduce the "misuse and overuse" of the jail. In the time since that money was awarded and spent, the jail population has actually increased and 9 inmates have died while behind bars. We don't believe that these same leaders should be given new resources to further their old and ineffective ideas.

The vast majority of those crowding the current jail are nonviolent offenders, people awaiting trial who cannot afford bail, and people who have been failed by other systems. The jail should not be a replacement for mental health or addiction treatment, for affordable public housing, or for any other service.

# IMMIGRANT SOLIDARITY

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Immigrants and refugees are an important part of the fabric of our community and we need to stand together to protect our neighbors from the dehumanizing and unconstitutional attacks on their rights and safety that have been intensified through policy and inaction against hate. Here's what you should know about attacks on immigrant rights locally:

In 2017, a group called Respect WA attempted to put an anti-immigrant profiling initiative on our city ballot, allowing for sweeping violations of the rights of anyone perceived to be undocumented by any city official. It was thrown out in court, **but is being challenged**. That it happened at all should be a wake up call for our community. Profiling is not ok here or anywhere!

The Border Patrol has been a regular, weekly presence at the Intermodal Center where they violate the 4th Amendment rights of all riders by boarding the busses with dogs and automatic weapons, demanding proof of citizenship from passengers without a warrant, and sometimes delaying and detaining riders as they pass through Spokane. Greyhound and the other bus companies have allowed this to happen and Mayor David Condon has refused to enforce an ordinance passed by City Council in 2018 to ban warrantless searches by Border Patrol from the city-owned Intermodal Center without a federal warrant.

As with other communities across the country, ICE has intensified action against immigrant communities, in workplaces and more broadly. In a link with the arguments against a new jail here, Spokane County is being paid by ICE and the US Marshals to hold people awaiting deportation in dedicated beds in the jail, profiting from this targeting of immigrants.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

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All of these issues can be overwhelming, but there are many ways to get involved in this work!

- Sign** a postcard right now expressing your opposition to a new jail
- Support **The Bail Project** and get people out of the jail now
- Donate** to the Undocumented Immigrant Legal Defense Fund
- Volunteer** with us this summer to spread the word about these campaigns
- Post** about these campaigns on social media, show your support!
- Show up** to community meetings and **speak up** about racial justice issues like these, **especially** if you are white. We **all** have a stake in racial justice and leaders need to hear that we care and are willing to fight for our whole community.
- Write** letters to the editor, email local leaders, and make yourself heard.
- Give your time and/or **financial support** to one of the amazing organizations led by people of color in our community.
- Educate** yourself about racial justice issues and then take action!

For a toolkit and further links, sources, and ideas for action, visit the SURJ page at [www.pjals.org](http://www.pjals.org).