

# **Drug Decriminalization: A Case Study on Abolition and Public Health**

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# Criminalization of Health Care Issues

**ABORTION**

**GENDER-  
AFFIRMING  
CARE**

**HARM  
REDUCTION**

**HIV/AIDS**

**MENTAL  
HEALTH +  
DISABILITY**

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# In Yet Another Declared Drug Crackdown, DA Jenkins Says 'This is a War on Fentanyl'

**Recent resurgence of War on Drugs-era rhetoric in response to the overdose epidemic.**



**Angela Davis**

“Prisons do not disappear social problems, they disappear human beings. Homelessness, unemployment, drug addiction, mental illness, and illiteracy are only a few of the problems that disappear from public view when the human beings contending with them are relegated to cages.”



Art by Molly Costello

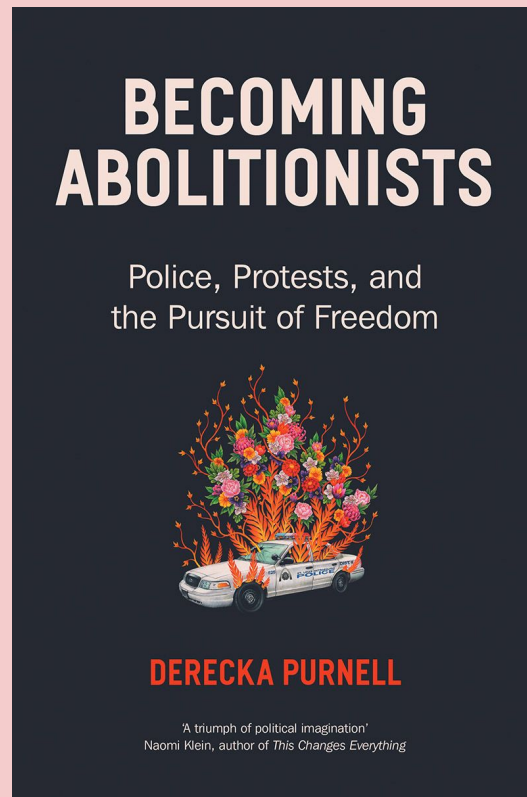
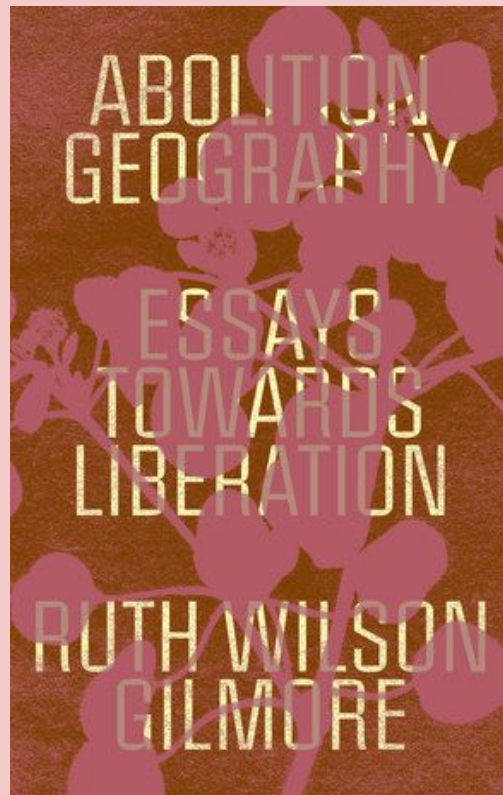
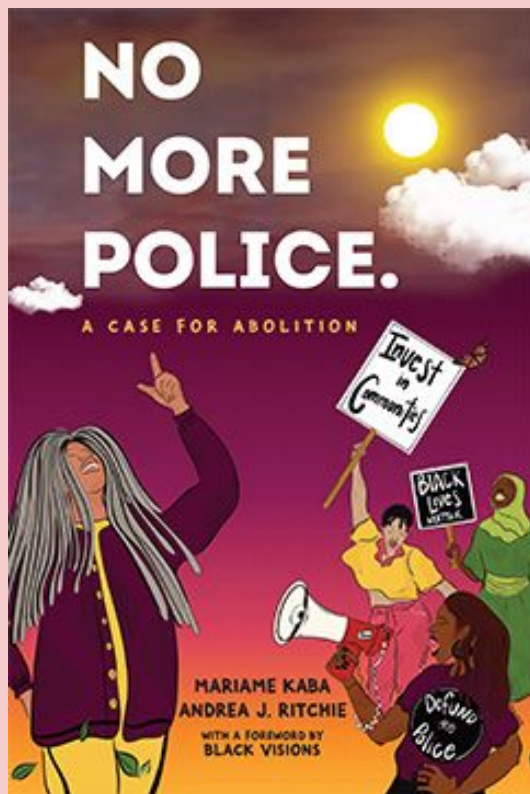
# Prison-Industrial Complex Abolition



**Kwame Ture**

“When you see people call themselves revolutionary always talking about destroying, destroying, destroying but never talking about building or creating, they’re not revolutionary. They do not understand the first thing about revolution. It’s creating.”







**Derecka Purnell**

“Plainly, what creates concentrated wealth also creates what my clients, my loved ones, and I experienced on a regular basis: concentrated poverty, homelessness, migration, hunger, despair, and anger. Concentrated wealth is celebrated, concentrated poverty is criminalized. Cities use police, prisons, and prosecutors to manage the space in between the two.”





## #DecrimPovertyDC Campaign

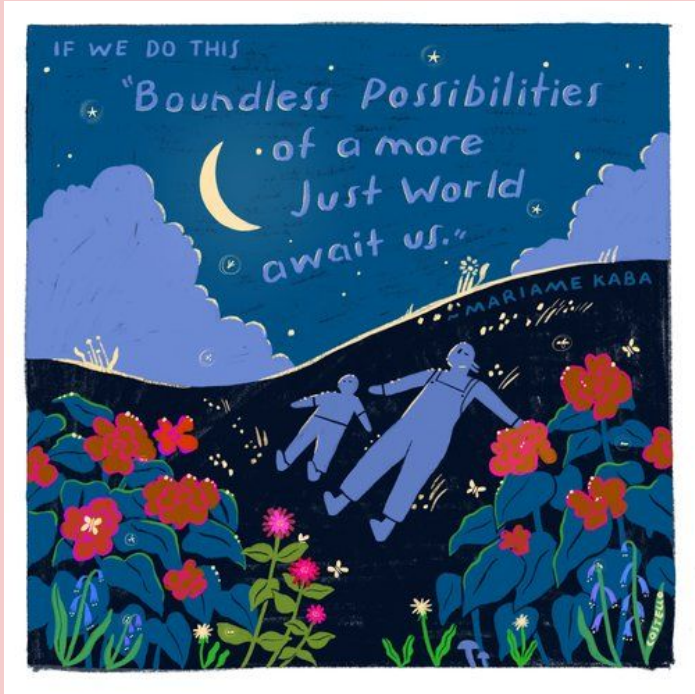
# Dismantling the power of the criminal-legal system to incarcerate people who use drugs



Art by Molly Costello

- Decriminalizing possession of a quantity of controlled substances consistent with personal use.
- Enacting sanctuary protections to prevent disclosure to federal immigration agencies of any information regarding a stop, search or health needs screening notice issued to an individual for an offense relating to drug possession.
- Prohibits the imposition of any sanction on an individual serving a period of probation, parole or supervised release for decriminalized personal-use drug possession or a positive drug test.

# Creating anti-carceral, community-based services that provide people with the resources they need to thrive



Art by Molly Costello

- Launching a 24/7 overdose prevention center where people can obtain harm reduction services such as sterile equipment and information for safer use of substances, fentanyl test strips, referrals to drug treatment providers, primary health care and other social services.
- Establishing a comprehensive mental health and substance use crisis response system for the assessment and dispatch of trained, non-law enforcement mobile teams to provide de-escalation, stabilization, and other necessary support for individuals in crisis.

# Impacts of Drug Decriminalization on Well-Being of Washingtonians



Art by Molly Costello

- **Addresses the racial inequity of the War on Drugs and the criminal-legal system:** 92.6% of Washingtonians arrested for drug offenses are Black.
- **Increases access to harm reduction-informed treatment:** Many PWUD avoid treatment out of fear of interacting with the criminal-legal system.
- **Improves care for pregnant people who use drugs:** Many pregnant PWUD avoid prenatal services out of fear of interacting with the criminal-legal system and child welfare system.
- **Reduces risk of deportation and family separation:** Drug enforcement is a primary driver of the U.S. deportation machine. After entry, drug offenses were the most common offense among people who were deported in 2019.

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# Thank You!

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