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Taking Exception to Criminal Justice Reforms that Fail to Transform: Using Transitional Justice to End the Carceral State

Angela A. Allen-Bell

B. K. Agnihotri Endowed Professor Southern University Law Center Post Office Box 9294 Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70813-9294 United States

This presentation takes issue with the notion of reforming a criminal justice system when the problems are systemic in nature. As an alternative to "reforming" criminal justice systems that fail, this presentation advocates for "transforming" them. This presentation will explain why reforms fall short in instances where systemic shortcomings plague a system, what transitional justice (TJ) is and why this internationally recognized approach to justice is worth considering when thinking of addressing criminal justice system failures. This presentation, though it focuses on the criminal justice system, has broader implications. The advocated transformation method extends to other systems, such as healthcare systems, educational system, etc. This presentation will explain how and why that is. It will also explain how and why this usage of TJ can work when there is political transition and where, as in the case of the United States, a stable democracy exists.

Biography:

Angela A. Allen-Bell is a respected expert on civil and human rights; social, restorative and transitional justice; and, the interplay between race and justice. It was her research that catapulted the movement that successfully ended the use of split juries in Louisiana in 2018. The House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana has commended her "for her achievements as a legal scholar" and has recognized and recorded "the tremendous pride and honor that she brings" to the state of Louisiana. Her signature traits are her never-ceasing desire to fight injustice and her tireless commitment to dismantling racial hierarchies and systems of oppression.