

# Caging Compassion: Recognizing and Resisting Carceral Humanist Narratives in Criminal Justice Reform

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Panelists:

James Kilgore, Building Community Power Fellow, Community Justice Exchange

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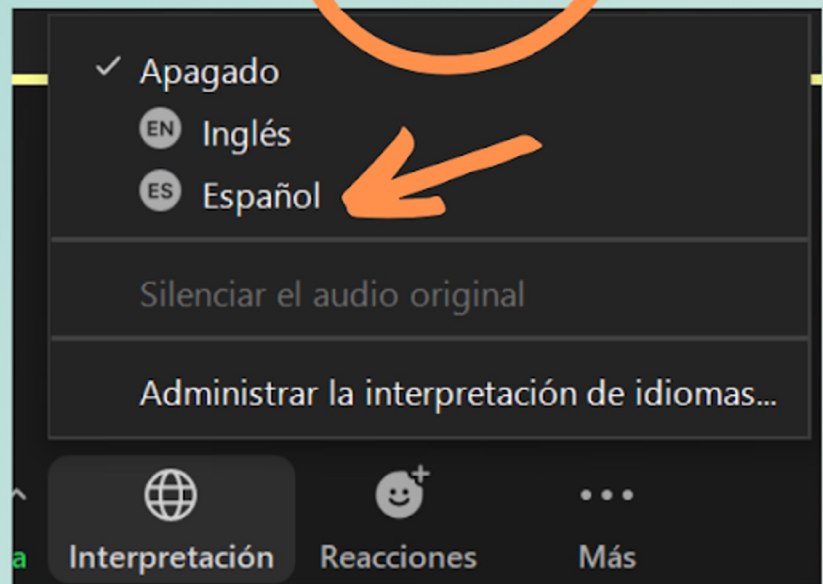
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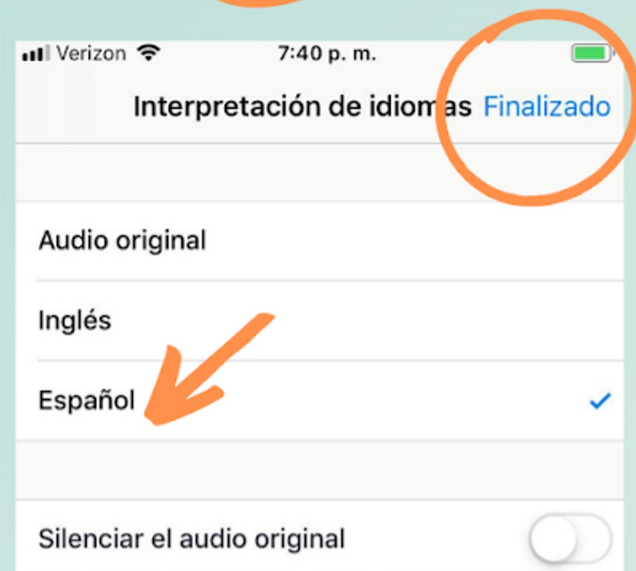
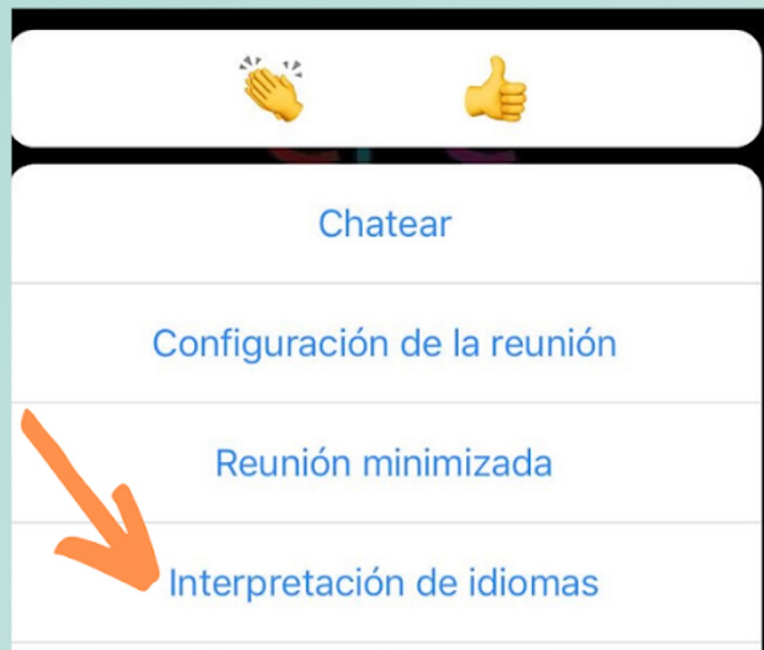
# PARA ACCEDER A LA INTERPRETACIÓN



Por computador



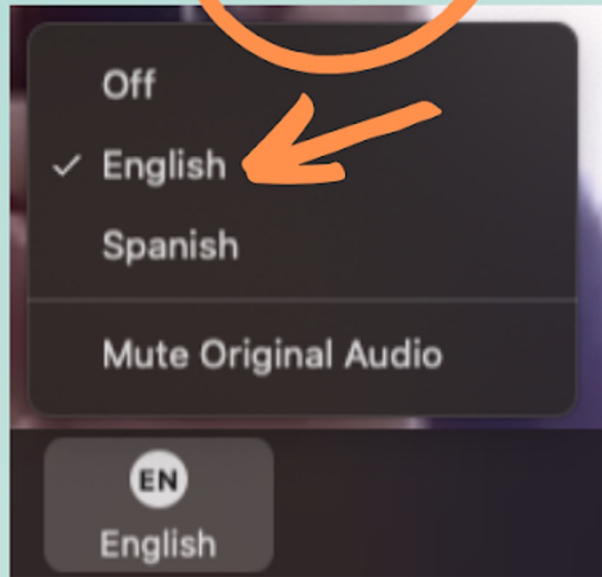
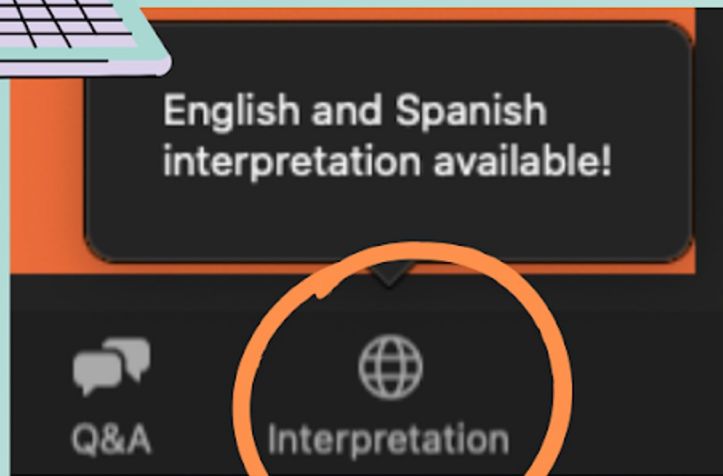
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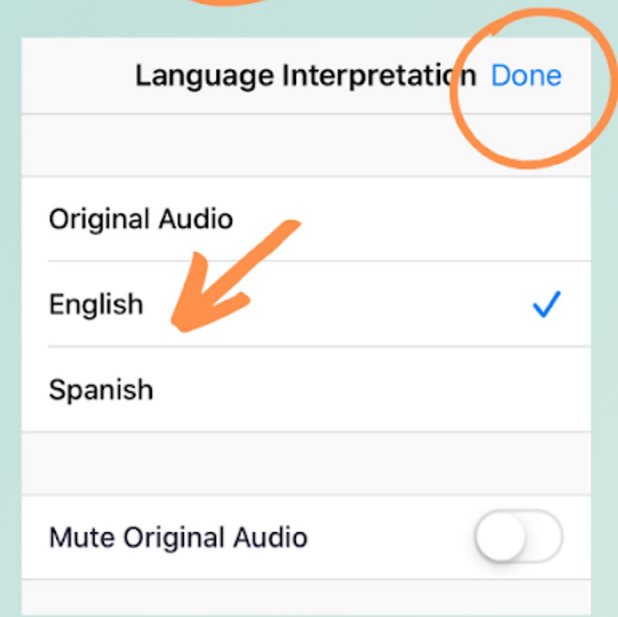
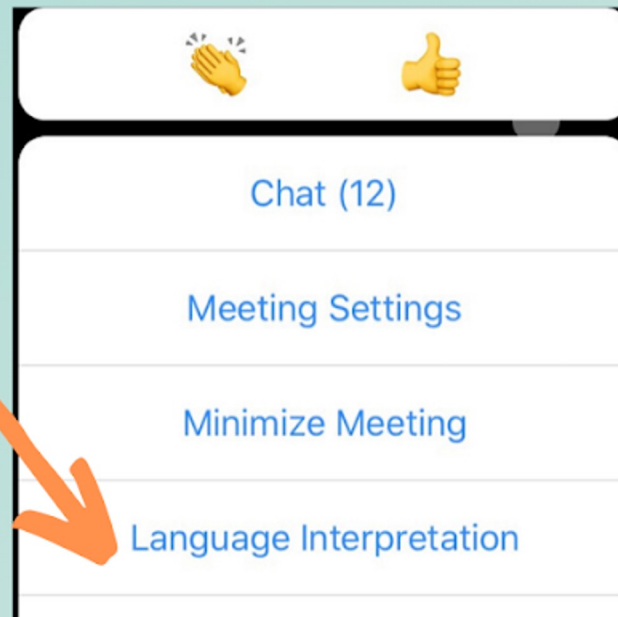
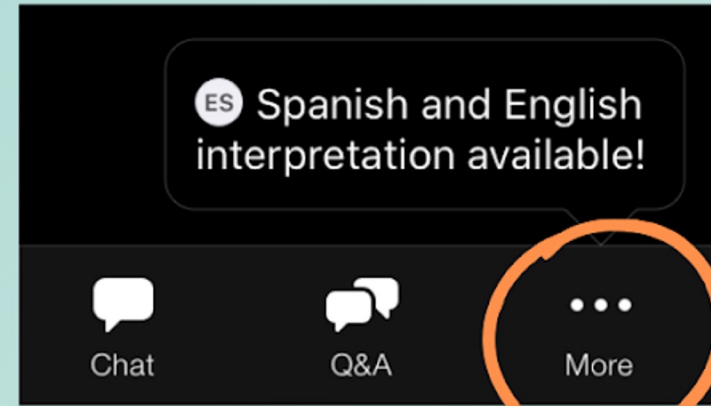
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# Welcome and Introductions

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# Overview

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- In this Webinar, we will:
  - Identify some of the key problems of Carceral Humanist reforms.
  - Discuss where and how these narratives appear and offer some useful counternarratives.
  - Share key strategies for identifying and pushing back against carceral humanist reforms.
  - Panelist discussion.
  - Q & A.

# Why are Carceral Humanist reforms a problem?

- The changes are superficial and specific rather than substantial and systemic.
  - ‘Individuals-in-custody’ are still being tortured in solitary confinement.
- The reforms redirect funding and support away from non-carceral community-based responses
  - Jails don’t solve mental health needs.
- The reforms replicate, relocate, or expand the capacity of carceral systems rather than change them.
  - The false promise of Alternatives to incarceration.
- They make future reforms harder.
  - Carveouts and stagnation.

Where and  
how do  
Carceral  
Humanist  
narratives  
appear?

- Jail Expansion
- Halfway Houses and Post Release Supervision
- Electronic Monitoring and other “Alternatives” to Incarceration
  - These are just a few...

# Strategies

- Assess the proposed solution.
- Examine the data.
- Offer real alternatives.

# Assess the Proposed Solution

- When a policy is proposed, ask whether it will increase, reduce, or have no impact upon:
  - The number of people subjected to harm,
  - The presence of carceral harm in our everyday lives,
  - The power of police and carceral institutions,
  - The influence of oppressed communities,
  - The availability of community-based resources, supportive services, and overall community health and stability,
  - The availability of non-carceral responses to harm, and,
  - The government's reliance on carceral responses.

# Examine the Data

- Consider
  - What data is being shared and how is it being presented?
  - How timely is the data?
  - How specific or accurate is the data?
  - What data is being downplayed or left out entirely?
  - Who is presenting the data and why?
  - Was/is the community involved in collecting the data?
  - What do those who have the data of lived experience have to say about the issue and suggested reforms?
  - Was there a way that impacted individuals could have played a bigger role in gathering and analyzing the data?

# Offer Real Alternatives

- Propose solutions that:
  - Redirect funding and resources away from carceral responses and into community-based responses to the root causes of harm,
  - Shift focus from retribution to prevention, reconciliation, healing, and addressing harm,
  - Increase meaningful opportunities for community engagement,
  - Support rather than criminalize marginalized populations and decriminalize survival strategies.

# Discussion

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Q&A

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# Get in Touch with our Panelists

## Mon Mohapatra

Organizing Coordinator,  
*Community Justice Exchange*

*Author: If They Build It:  
Organizing Lessons &  
Strategies Against Carceral  
Infrastructure*

## James Kilgore

Building Community Power  
Fellow, *Community Justice  
Exchange*

Director of Advocacy and  
Outreach, *First Followers*

*Author: Understanding Mass  
Incarceration; Understanding  
E-Carceration; A Luta  
Continua*

# Resources for Opposing Carceral Humanism Reforms

- [\*\*Carceral Humanism Toolkit\*\*](#)—offers tools for identifying carceral humanist approaches and how to advocate for more effective policy..
- [\*\*Contending with Carveouts toolkit\*\*](#)—Provides resources to show the problems with carveouts in reforms and arguments to avoid them.
- [\*\*Cautionary Jails: Deconstructing the three “C’s” of jail construction arguments\*\*](#)—discusses how capacity, contemporary, and compassionate arguments are used to drive jail construction and offers strategies for opposing them.
- [\*\*If They Build It: Organizing lessons and strategies against carceral infrastructure\*\*](#)—lessons learned and recommendations for opposing carceral infrastructure from Community Justice Exchange

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