

March 27, 2021

The Honorable Keith Perry



Gainesville, FL 32606

Dear Senator Perry,

We are students at the University of Florida, an institution that - at the pressure of a student-led coalition - has [denounced the use of unpaid prison](#) labor at the school's agricultural fields. These efforts and ongoing campus movements to discontinue the use of prison labor by the university's food provider [Aramark](#) have prompted us to look at the prison labor system in Florida. Unfortunately we have come across some extremely problematic legislation that violates the economic rights of inmates. We hope that given Florida's long history of unpaid prison labor you are willing to explore these concerns with us and take action.

The average hourly wage for Floridian prison laborers is between [20 cents and 55 cents per hour](#). These wages are nowhere near sufficient to be liveable, especially considering that some prisoners are charged for their own accommodations while in the care of a prison. These ["pay-to-stay" policies](#) force prisoners to use their wages to cover the cost of housing, food, and other necessities, and are especially prevalent in Florida. These wage policies are enforced by the "Criminal Procedure and Corrections" section of the [2005 Florida Code](#). Section II, Part I of [Chapter 946](#) of the Florida Code establishes that each institution or program payment plan will be outlined by the department of corrections that oversees it, with no guidelines regarding a bare minimum payment requirement. This section also states that any payment made to the prisoner will be used, in part or in full, to pay off court-ordered restitution, giving the prison laborer little to no profit for their work. The third portion of Section II also grants correctional departments the right to reclaim the money paid to laborers as repayment for food, housing, and any other costs of living the inmate may incur, and denying inmates the opportunity to accumulate savings while serving their sentence. This section establishes a profoundly oppressive and unacceptable template for systemic and state-wide deprivation of payment for inmate laborers that we demand be changed and replaced with more equitable and humane policies.

To redress the aforementioned issues, we first request that inmates be paid in accordance with state labor regulations. At the very least they should be receiving direct wages equivalent to Florida's (non-tipped) minimum wage (\$8.65 per hour) every two weeks. Secondly, we advocate for the abolishment of [section 2A-2C of the Part I, Chapter 946 of the Florida Criminal Procedure and Corrections in the Florida Code \(2005\)](#) as it directly perpetuates the economic exploitation of inmates. Our proposals are two of many that need to be adopted to reform the prison labor system in Florida. We hope that you join us in our efforts towards promoting these human rights protections.

Sincerely,

Francis Cadavid, Skyler Dunbar, Emily Santiana, and Aubrey Trivison

March 27, 2021

The Honorable Charles Wesley



Jonesville, FL 32669-3391

Dear Representative Wesley,

We are students at the University of Florida, an institution that - at the pressure of a student-led coalition - has [denounced the use of unpaid prison](#) labor at the school's agricultural fields. These efforts and ongoing campus movements to discontinue the use of prison labor by the university's food provider [Aramark](#) have prompted us to look at the prison labor system in Florida. Unfortunately we have come across some extremely problematic legislation that violates the economic rights of inmates. We hope that given Florida's long history of unpaid prison labor you are willing to explore these concerns with us and take action.

The average hourly wage for Floridian prison laborers is between [20 cents and 55 cents per hour](#). These wages are nowhere near sufficient to be liveable, especially considering that some prisoners are charged for their own accommodations while in the care of a prison. These ["pay-to-stay" policies](#) force prisoners to use their wages to cover the cost of housing, food, and other necessities, and are especially prevalent in Florida. These wage policies are enforced by the "Criminal Procedure and Corrections" section of the [2005 Florida Code](#). Section II, Part I of [Chapter 946](#) of the Florida Code establishes that each institution or program payment plan will be outlined by the department of corrections that oversees it, with no guidelines regarding a bare minimum payment requirement. This section also states that any payment made to the prisoner will be used, in part or in full, to pay off court-ordered restitution, giving the prison laborer little to no profit for their work. The third portion of Section II also grants correctional departments the right to reclaim the money paid to laborers as repayment for food, housing, and any other costs of living the inmate may incur, and denying inmates the opportunity to accumulate savings while serving their sentence. This section establishes a profoundly oppressive and unacceptable template for systemic and state-wide deprivation of payment for inmate laborers that we demand be changed and replaced with more equitable and humane policies.

To redress the aforementioned issues, we first request that inmates be paid in accordance with state labor regulations. At the very least they should be receiving direct wages equivalent to Florida's (non-tipped) minimum wage (\$8.65 per hour) every two weeks. Secondly, we advocate for the abolishment of [section 2A-2C of the Part I, Chapter 946 of the Florida Criminal Procedure and Corrections in the Florida Code \(2005\)](#) as it directly perpetuates the economic exploitation of inmates. Our proposals are two of many that need to be adopted to reform the prison labor system in Florida. We hope that you join us in our efforts towards promoting these human rights protections.

Sincerely,

Francis Cadavid, Skyler Dunbar, Emily Santiana, and Aubrey Trivison