



**CALIFORNIA
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DREDF

Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

California Approves \$7.5 Million Budget Request to Provide Reparations to Survivors of State Sponsored Forced Sterilizations

Sacramento, California (July, 2021) --- On July 12, Governor Gavin Newsom approved the \$7.5 million budget request to provide reparations to survivors of state sponsored forced or involuntary sterilizations under California's eugenics laws from 1909-1979 and survivors of involuntary sterilizations in women's state prisons after 1979.

This makes California the third state in the nation to provide monetary compensation to survivors who were sterilized under state eugenics laws and the first state to both provide notification of coerced sterilization and reparations to survivors who were sterilized while incarcerated in its state women's prisons.

Between 1909 and 1979, California sterilized at least 20,000 people under State law — accounting for one third of eugenics sterilizations nationwide. People with disabilities, Latinas, women, and poor people were disproportionately targeted for sterilization. Although the State repealed its eugenics law in 1979, its reproductive violence continued in State prisons into the 2010's. Most recently, sterilization, a legacy of the country's eugenics practices, was being used against immigrant women in detention centers in Georgia, making it clear that forced and involuntary sterilizations have never stopped in the U.S., nor in California.

Between 2006 and 2010, a [State audit](#) revealed that at least 144 people, the majority of whom identify as Black and Latinax, were illegally sterilized during labor and delivery while in custody in women's prisons. Additionally, according to state documents and interviews, there are at least 100 more individuals who were forcibly sterilized dating back to the late 1990s. To this day, many survivors still do not even know that their reproductive capacity was stolen from them.

Black, Indigenous, Latinx, incarcerated people, people with disabilities, and people living in poverty have been disproportionately targeted for sterilizations. The victory of this budget request is an important step for California in confronting its shameful history and taking a bold stand against the racist, sexist, and ableist practices that perpetuate health inequities to this day.

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This budget request was co-sponsored by [Back to the Basics Community Empowerment \(B2B\)](#), [California Coalition for Women Prisoners \(CCWP\)](#), [California Latinas for Reproductive Justice \(CLRJ\)](#), and the [Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund \(DREDF\)](#), in collaboration with the [Sterilization and Social Justice Lab](#)

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Coalition Quotes

“To this day, many survivors who were sterilized while in prison still don’t know that their reproductive capacities were stolen from them. With the launch of reparations, we will finally receive justice that we have fought so long for and the healing process can truly begin. It’s time.”
— Kelli Dillon, Founder of Back to the Basics, Sterilization Survivor, and Film Participant.

“The legacy of California’s eugenics laws is well-known and their repercussions continue to be felt. As reproductive justice advocates, we recognize the continued impact these state-sponsored policies have had on the dignity and rights of poor women of color who have been stripped of their ability to form the families they want. No amount of monetary compensation will ever remedy the wrongs committed but this bill is a step in the right direction in the state taking responsibility to remedy the violence inflicted on survivors.”— Laura Jimenez, Executive Director, CLRJ. “

“After 4 years of advocating for reparations, the Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund is heartened that California has taken a necessary first step towards ending its legacy of eugenics. While no amount of money can bring justice to survivors, we are thankful California has taken responsibility for its past abuses, and we are hopeful this marks a turning point in this State’s treatment of people with disabilities and others who have been targeted for reproductive oppression.” — Carly A. Myers, Staff Attorney, DREDF.

“The California Coalition for Women Prisoners hails this groundbreaking reparations program for incarcerated women and trans people who suffered involuntary sterilization while in California prisons. We hope this victory paves the way for other BIPOC communities to achieve additional forms of reparations in response to centuries of state sanctioned violence and abuse.” — Aminah Elster, CCWP’s Campaign and Policy Coordinator.

“The Sterilization and Social Justice Lab is gratified that this bill will provide long-awaited compensation to survivors of involuntary sterilization in California, and will continue to inform this process and to highlight links between past and present experiences of reproductive injustice.” — Dr. Alexandra Minna Stern and Dr. Nicole Novak, Sterilization and Social Justice Lab