

TOOL KIT

flocc

faith|policy|vision

**The Truth About the American Death  
Penalty System, Race & Faith.**

# culture

Black-founded and female-led, our organization is rooted in the legacy of Black faith leaders whose moral courage transformed the civic and human rights landscape. We are led by the work of Ida B. Wells, Mary McCloud Bethune, Mary Church Terrell, bell hooks, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Septima Clark, and countless other movement builders who understood that Southern movement work required community leaders, clear/strong vision and cultural enrichment. Our mission is grounded in justice, compassion, and liberation.

Our workplace culture is collaborative, self-motivated, creative, and deeply inclusive. We value innovation, shared leadership, and deep imagination. FLOCC regularly engages with partners across the legal and legislative sectors, creating a transformative environment where advocacy, policy, and faith-rooted organizing intersect.

# flocc

The Faith Leaders of Color Coalition (flocc) is a multifaith Black and Indigenous community dedicated to learning and supporting advocacy, legislation, and litigation challenging the use of the American Death Penalty system on a state and federal level.

The Faith Leaders of Color Coalition or (flocc) allows space for Black and Indigenous faith leaders to build community, ask questions, take action, and collaborate with movement leaders working to end the death penalty in America.

The Faith Leaders of Color Coalition (flocc) was born out of a collaborative justice initiative when policy leaders, advocates, activists, lawyers, academics, and faith leaders desired to extend access of policy and execution information directly to Black and Indigenous pastors/clergy.

flocc honors the work, influence, and progress of Black/Indigenous pastors and faith leaders who were often on the frontlines of human rights movements- challenging systems of segregation, violence, oppression, and discrimination from the early 1600s to the early 2000s.

-

## **flocc is not:**

- a C4 organization
- a Political Organization
- a Church
- a For Profit Organization
- a Law Firm

# flocc

The Faith Leaders of Color Coalition (flocc) is a multifaith national organization dedicated to advocating for justice, equity, and interrogation into the American Capital Punishment system.

The Faith Leaders of Color Coalition (flocc) allows space for Black and Indigenous faith leaders to build community, ask questions, take action, and collaborate with other movement leaders working to end the system of death in America.

The Faith Leaders of Color Coalition (flocc) was born out of a cohort in 2021 when policy leaders, advocates, activists, lawyers, academics, and faith leaders desired to extend access of policy, legal, and execution information directly to Black and Indigenous pastors/clergy. This initiative which started as 21 people on a Zoom call, has now grown into an organization of more than 800+ supporters, friends and partners.

## **flocc's core values:**

### **1. Advocate for Policies to Eliminate the use of the capital punishment system:**

flocc will work to eliminate the capital punishment system, addressing racial discrimination, intellectual disability, wrongful convictions, felony murder, innocence claims and inhumane conditions on death row.

### **2. Empower Faith Leaders:**

flocc will empower Black and Indigenous clergy to use their moral authority, leverage power and promote spiritual teachings to advocate for an end to state-sanctioned death in their communities.

### **3. Cast Vision:**

The coalition aims to educate the public about the injustices and uneven applications when death sentences are applied, particularly with white victims. flocc will introduce ways to hold district attorneys, prison actors and municipalities accountable for authentic public safety.

### **4. Promote Healing:**

flocc recognizes the profound trauma inflicted by the death penalty on both victims' families and those involved in the system. The coalition will work toward healing, reconciliation and restoration.

# System Disruption & the Church

If you would like a more extensive presentation, please contact us at the information below.



Slave Rebellions & People of Faith

1600s-1800s



Anti-Lynching Campaigns and Protests

1600s-1900s



The Civil Rights Movement and the Jim Crow South

1900s-1970s



The War on the Black Church & War on Drugs & Poverty

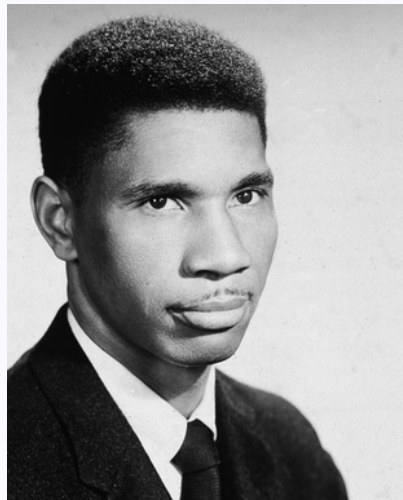
1980s-2000s



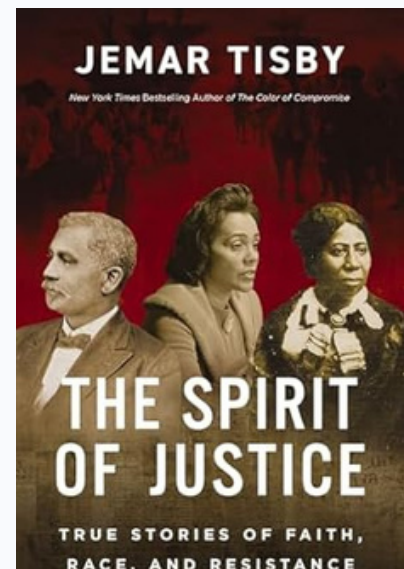
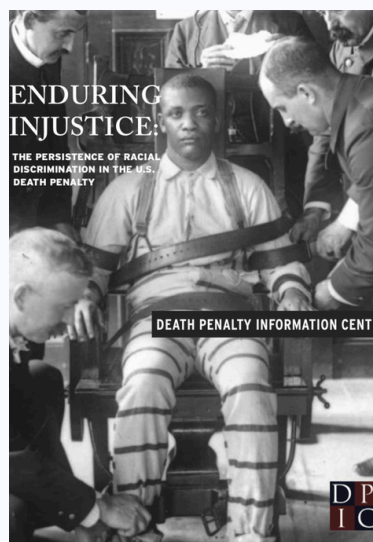
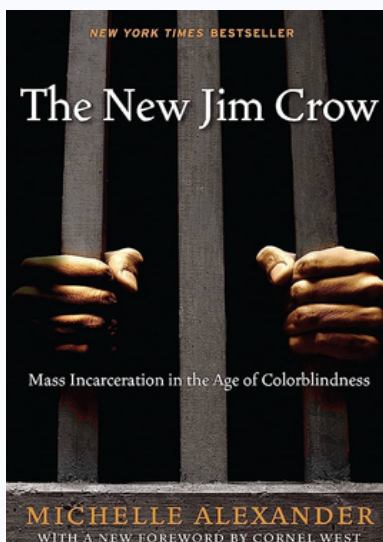
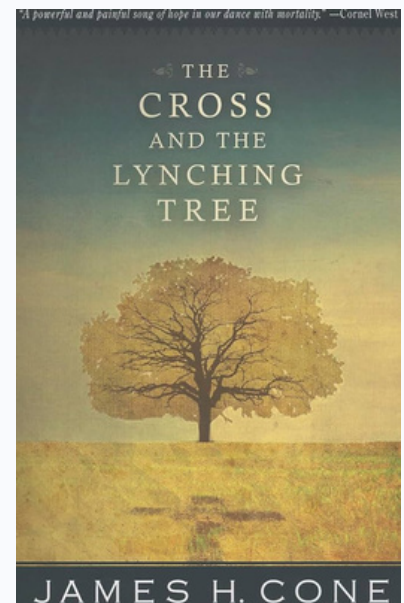
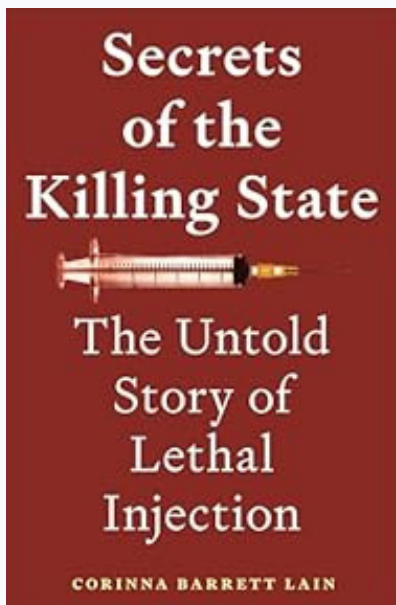
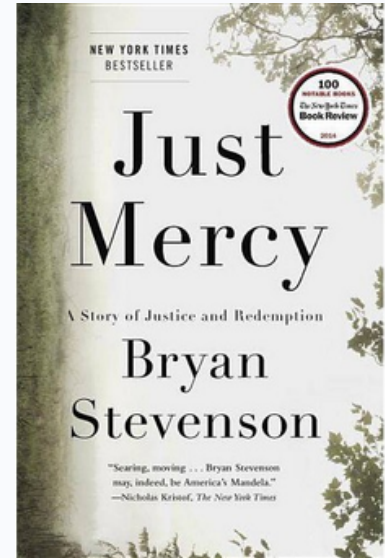
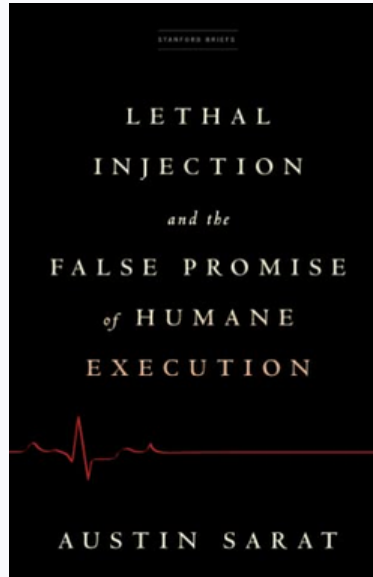
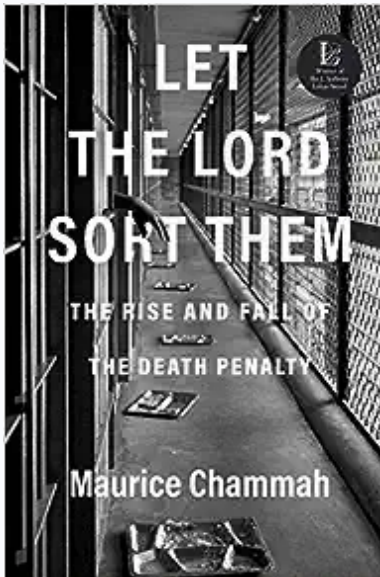
The American Capital Punishment System & Racial Equity

2000s-2020s

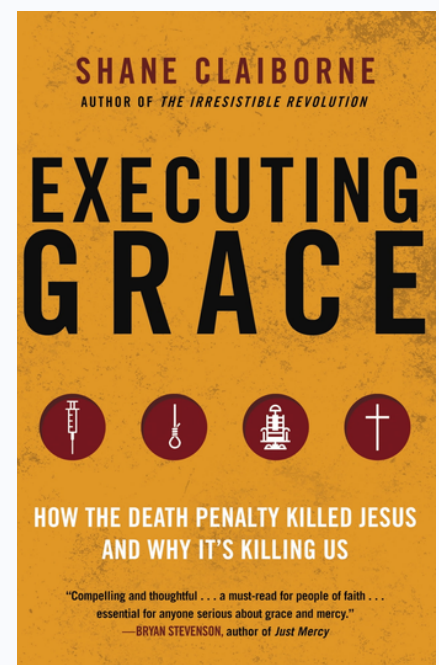
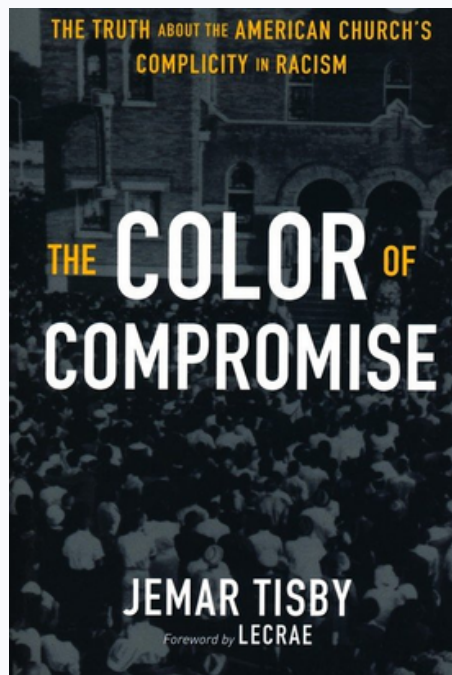
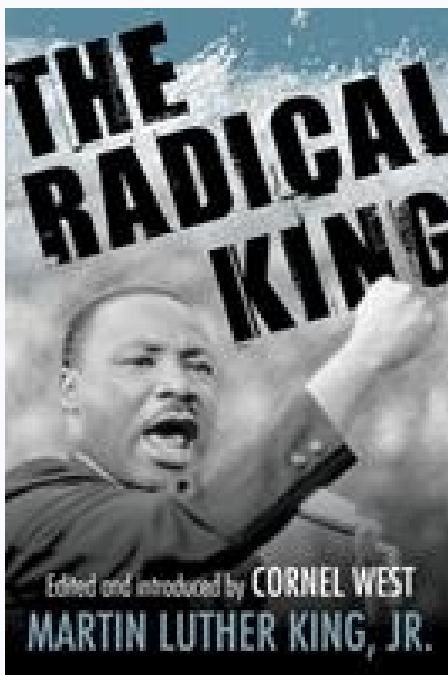
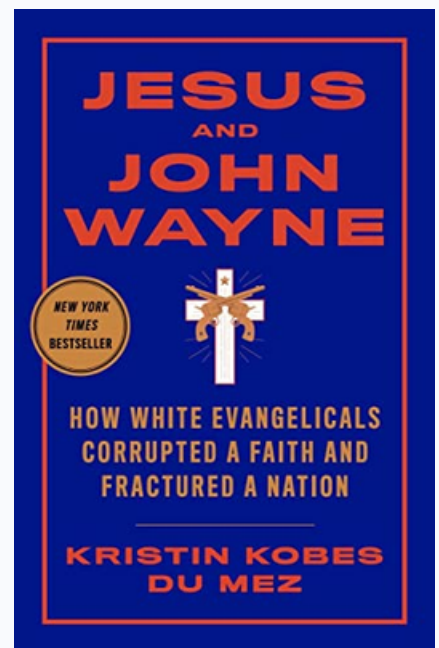
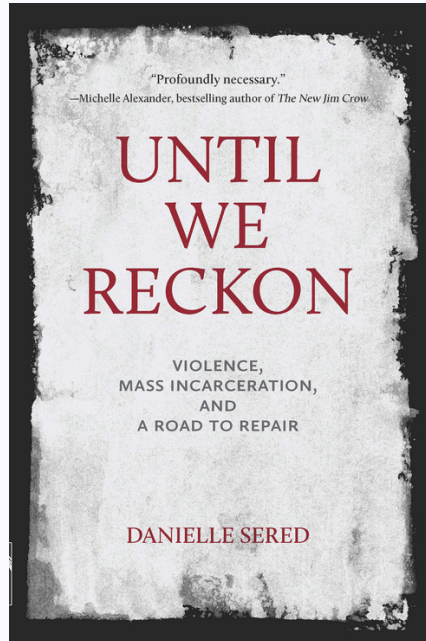
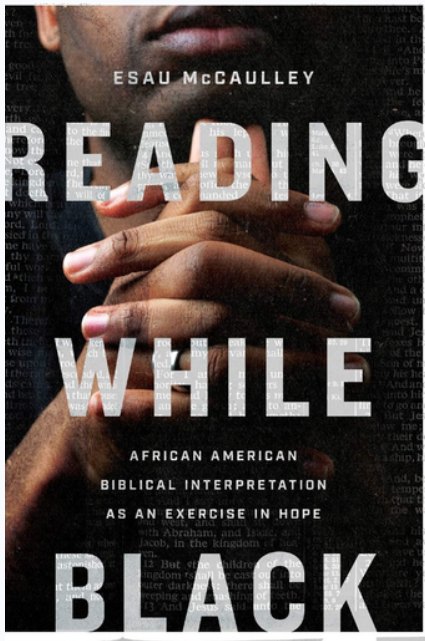
# A few Ancestral Guides



# floc recommended reading

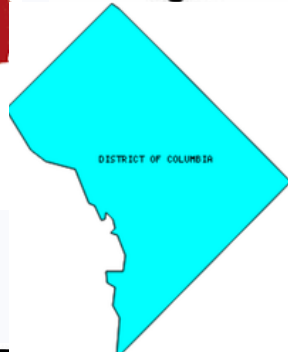
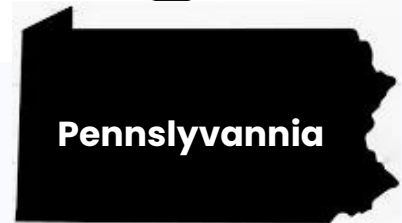


# floc recommended reading



# flocc circles

*flocc state circles include 3 or more people involved in flocc national who meet and make decisions about anti-death penalty abolition actions supporting state advocates working on various bills, cases, and/or campaigns. If your state is not represented, contact us.*



# flocc partners

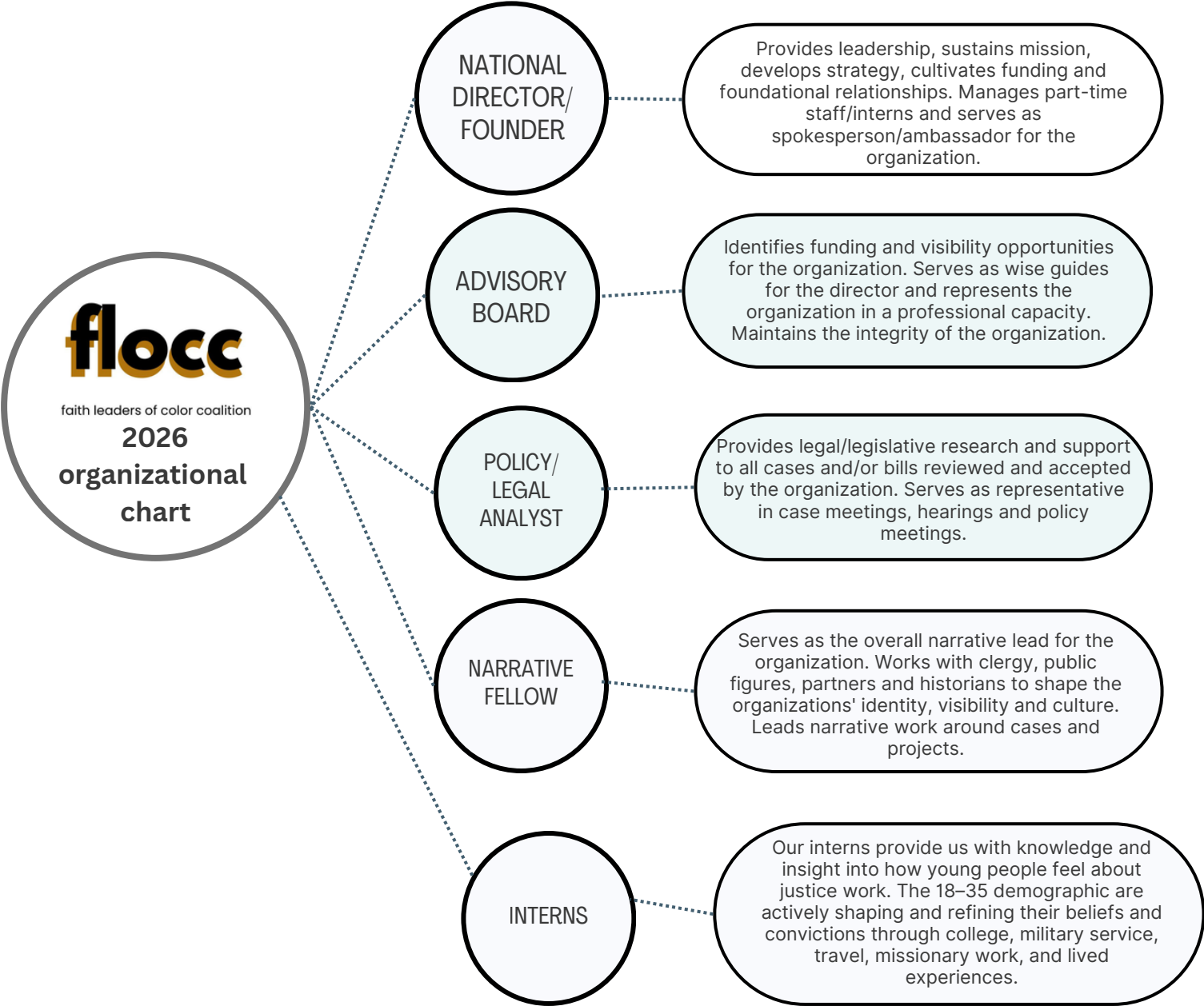
flocc state/national partners have collaborated with flocc on state and federal campaigns. If you would like to be a partner email us: [joia@floccjustice.org](mailto:joia@floccjustice.org)



# flocc's 8 problems with the American Death Penalty

- **Deterrence Issues** – people often offend unconscious of the death penalty as a punishment for their crimes. States that have the death penalty still have high violent crime rates. Additionally, many countries that do not have the death penalty have low crime rates. The death penalty is not an effective deterrent.
- **The death penalty is arbitrarily applied to people because of their race**, the race of their victim, the skill of their attorney, their county, and/or their economic status. Death Sentences are not a one size fits all punishment for murder.
- **Since 1976, over 200 people have been exonerated from death row**, according to the Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC). This means 1 exoneration for every 45.9 people sentenced to death or 2.2% of the people sentenced to death. Including pre-Furman cases with post-Furman exonerations, there has been 1 exoneration for every 8.2 executions.
- **Race plays an outsized role in capital cases** – There are a few cases of Black individuals who were given death sentences that were sentenced as a result of prosecutorial misconduct, hidden DNA-related evidence, and/or “bleached juries”. Racial discrimination is almost always included in every phase of a capital case.
- **Torturous execution methods are highly controversial**– and the cocktail of drugs used for lethal injection are sometimes obtained illegally by states – Big Pharma does not want to be associated with lethal injection, therefore Mom and Pop pharmacies are often the suppliers. There are other methods of execution in question in other states.
- **The death penalty contradicts the application of grace and mercy** in many major religious denominations in America. Also, the death penalty challenges moral “pro-life” arguments and redemption tenets. More religious communities are challenging the idea of the death penalty as a human rights issue.
- **States are still executing people with intellectual disabilities after the ruling of Atkins v. Virginia** where the Supreme Court, in a 6–3 decision, ruled that executions of intellectually disabled incarcerated persons are “cruel and unusual punishments” prohibited by the Eighth Amendment. More states are challenging the execution of those with intellectual disabilities through policies and legal proceedings.
- **The Death Penalty is fiscally irresponsible**– many studies have shown that the death penalty is more expensive than life in prison without parole. The high costs come from lengthy trials, mandatory appeals, and the need for maximum security death row facilities. These expenses often outweigh the cost of keeping a prisoner incarcerated for life. There are some states that abolished the death penalty solely based on cost.

# flocc's organizational structure



# flocc's ecosystem



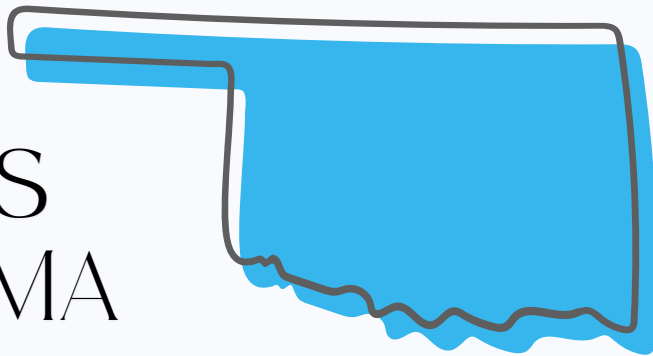
# STATES THAT NEED YOUR SUPPORT



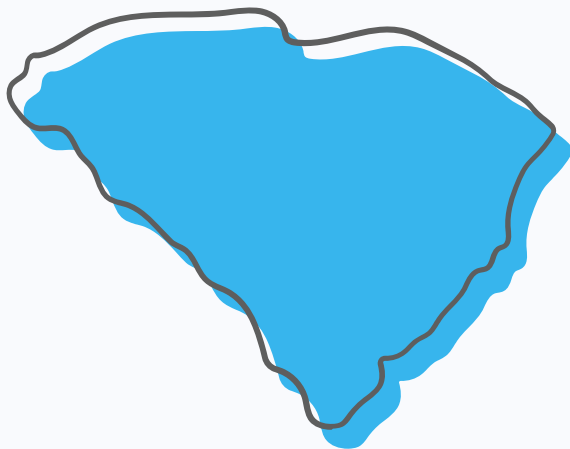
STOP  
EXECUTIONS  
IN LOUISIANA

**[click here](#)**

STOP  
EXECUTIONS  
IN OKLAHOMA



**[click here](#)**



STOP  
EXECUTIONS IN  
SOUTH  
CAROLINA

**[click here](#)**

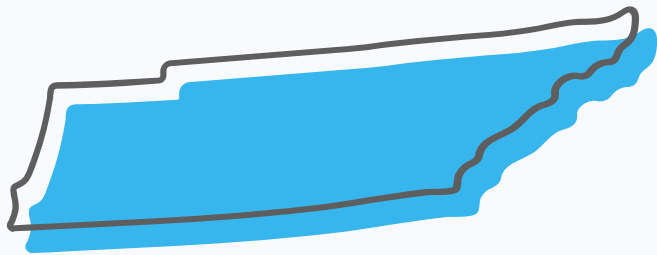
# STATES THAT NEED YOUR SUPPORT



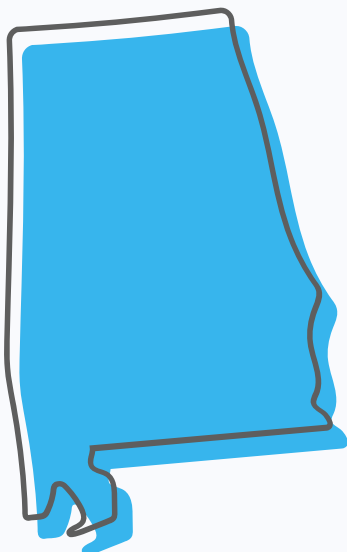
STOP  
EXECUTIONS  
IN TEXAS

**[click here](#)**

STOP  
EXECUTIONS  
IN TENNESSEE



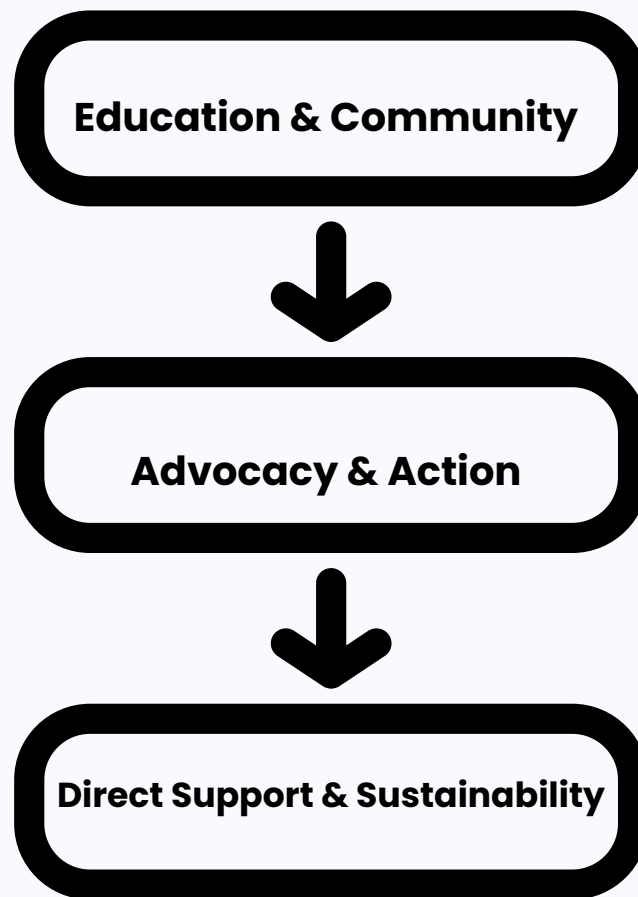
**[click here](#)**



STOP  
EXECUTIONS IN  
SOUTH  
ALABAMA

**[click here](#)**

# flocc theory of change



In order to influence and affect change toward ending the American Death Penalty System on a state and federal level we believe that Black & Indigenous clergy must be included in conversations, coalitions, decisions and actions directly related to its end. We believe flocc circles will be the catalyst to raising visibility on the abolition of the American Death Penalty System.

flocc circles will directly and intentionally engage Black & Indigenous clergy and communities through education, advocacy, and actions related to ending the death penalty. flocc circles are led by 2-3 circle leaders and sustained through remaining flocc partners. In order to build a flocc circle, states must have 3-5 engaged partners. flocc circles usually meet 1x a month or every other month. flocc national supports all flocc circles.

# flocc engagement start-up activities

**Policy & Prayer  
Brunch**

**Book Discussions**

**Storytelling Events**

**One on Ones**

## **Additional Organizing Support:**

- Find out who your state representatives are
- Find out who your state senators are
- Find out who your District Attorney is
- Find out who your Attorney General is
- Court Watch in your General Sessions and Criminal Courts
- Become a Pen Pal with someone on death row

# flocc leadership



Joia Erin Thornton

## **Founder & National Director**

Joia is a Policy Strategist/Analyst, Writer, and Storyteller. She has a unique hometown experience growing up in Memphis, Tennessee, and New Orleans, Louisiana; two cities that have wrestled with class, race, economic, and overall systemic challenges. Joia formed the Faith Leaders of Color Coalition (flocc) to honor the work of Black and Indigenous faith leaders who have contributed to civil/human rights movements throughout history. Joia uses the framework of faith, race, and historical accounts from the Southern diaspora to boldly confront America's relationship with the death penalty system.

[floccjustice.org](http://floccjustice.org)

[faithleadersofcolor@gmail.com](mailto:faithleadersofcolor@gmail.com)

IG: @floccjustice

Twitter: @floccjustice

YT: floccjustice

FB: The Faith Leaders of Color Coalition

page left intentionally blank