

Question:

Hi Eric,

I feel helpless when it comes to supporting trans prisoners and fighting back against the growing repression against them. How do we best offer our solidarity to trans people behind the bars?

--Protect Trans Prisoners, but how?

Eric's Answer:

What is happening to trans prisoners in this country is beyond disheartening and devastating. However gross it feels like to us, I guarantee you it is worse for them. I think it is very important to not see all trans prisoners as a monolith.

When we speak about prisoners we need to speak about them as individual people. That is a common theme in how I view doing support. So the first thing we need to do, all of us, is ask what is needed. What does this specific trans prisoner want done? Are they in a safe place with a partner and chill vibes? Then they might want nothing except some money for canteen. Are they in a prison where they are being denied gender affirming care or being placed in dangerous situations, then they may want us to do everything we can. Call in campaigns, letter writings, protest, demonstrations, post and share their words as far as our reach can extend, etc. etc. etc.

As a whole though, we need to meet people where they are at. Jumping the gun on doing what we feel SHOULD happen, ignores their reality. In federal prison, people are going to lose their care and be placed in situations that may be unsafe or at the very least demoralizing in nature. We absolutely can do broad support to prevent that from happening, and that is through public pressure. Visible, demonstrative pressure. Also though, and this annoys people, The best way to make change in the BOP, is through senators and congress people. They hate being harassed and they are often so thirsty to appease their voters. We sometimes need to play their game to win our prizes, and that sometimes can mean lobbying these pieces of

shit to do the bare minimum.

If you write a trans person inside, ask them. Then ask them if there are others inside who may need help. Then ask your friends who they know and write them. Be loud. Be visible. Be available. Be willing to do things that are exhausting, joyless, difficult and time consuming. This isn't a fun game, but it is one we can win.

What is abolition? What does it look like in practice? Ask our friend, author, and former political prisoner Eric King your most burning questions about setting fire to the prisons and what we'll make out of the ashes.

Write to Eric and explore questions relating to harm and accountability, prisons and the prison industrial complex, and how you can practice abolition every day.