

## **Community Cages: The (Neo) Liberal Politics of Local Carceral Expansion**

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As numerous so-called red states now speak of being “smart on crime,” they and other jurisdictions frame familiar policy and practice—such as building or expanding carceral infrastructure—as embodying new benevolent logics and as heralding an era of reform. This “carceral humanism,” as the scholar James Kilgore has described it, complicates analyses of the carceral state solely focused on the punitive turn. In this paper, based on my book *Progressive Punishment: Job Loss, Jail Growth, and the Neoliberal Logic of Carceral Expansion*, I examine one outwardly progressive community in a traditionally red state as it attempted to build a “justice campus,” including a new jail, juvenile detention center, and work release facility. Framed by its supporters as an extension of local liberal politics and welfare services, the justice campus would have significantly expanded the carceral capacities of the community. The paper traces specific political economic shifts in the community as they set the conditions for and animated the cultural politics of carceral expansion.