

The Alabama Strategy

Reclaiming Lives & Restoring Hope by Making Room

October 1–3, 2026 | Montgomery, Alabama

Summit Schedule

Day 1: Thursday, October 1

6:00 PM Registration and Welcome Reception

Michelle Browder's Sculpture Studio | 513 N. Lawrence Street, Montgomery, AL 36104

Heavy hors d'oeuvres and drinks kick off the summit at the studio of Michelle Browder, Executive & Artistic Director of The More Up Campus and creator of the Mothers of Gynecology Monument.

Chef Crystal | *Catering*

A private chef and nutrition consultant to some of the world's most talented entertainers, athletes, and health enthusiasts, catering the opening reception.

6:30 – 7:30 PM Musical Performance

Chris Hanebutt | *Musical Guest, alongside local Alabama artists*

An award-winning composer/producer known for crafting emotionally resonant, genre-blending scores across film and television, Chris Hanebutt will perform alongside local Alabama artists and share the story behind composing the music for the HBO documentary *The Alabama Solution*.

7:30 – 9:00 PM Mix & Mingle

Attendees are invited to close out the evening engaging with local artists and fellow participants.

Day 2: Friday, October 2

8:30 – 8:50 AM Welcome and Registration

EJI Legacy Hall | 608 N. Court Street, Montgomery, AL 36104

Michelle Browder and Stephen Browder

Chaplain Curtis Browder | *Founder, Chaplain Curtis Browder Ministries & Summit Host*

For nearly 45 years, Chaplain Curtis Browder has provided housing, food, and supportive services to formerly incarcerated individuals across Alabama, and welcomes attendees to open the summit's first full day.

9:00 – 10:00 AM Keynote: The Work of Equal Justice

Bryan Stevenson | *Founder & Executive Director, Equal Justice Initiative*

Bryan Stevenson leads the Equal Justice Initiative, a human rights organization in Montgomery that has won major legal challenges eliminating excessive sentencing, exonerating innocent death row prisoners, and confronting the mistreatment of incarcerated people. He has argued and won multiple cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, including a 2012 ruling banning mandatory life-without-parole sentences for children 17 and younger, and has secured relief for more than 140 wrongly condemned prisoners. He led the creation of EJI's Legacy Sites, including the Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice.

10:15 – 11:15 AM Making Room: Ministry, Justice, and Economic Opportunity in Reentry

What does it take to create meaningful pathways home? This conversation explores how ministry, justice, and economic opportunity can work together to support restoration, economic opportunity, and successful reentry for justice-impacted individuals. Panelists will share perspectives on second chances, workforce development, entrepreneurship, and building communities where people have the opportunity to rebuild and thrive.

Panelist

Chaplain Curtis Browder | *Chaplain Curtis Browder Ministries; Summit Host*

Judge Sue Bell Cobb | *Former Chief Justice, Alabama Supreme Court*

Deon Wright | *Co-founder, Power Grid Professionals*

11:25 – 11:55 AM Policy in Practice: Local Advocacy, and National Research Shaping Reentry Reform

How can policy reform, research, and lived practice come together to create better pathways for people impacted by incarceration? This conversation grounds the summit in Alabama, pairing local policy and advocacy experience with researchers who have spent decades working directly with justice-impacted people and their families, to explore how policy, advocacy, and community-engaged research can shape stronger systems for reentry and support.

Panelist

Dawn Owens | *Leader & Advocate*

Amy B. Smoyer, PhD, MSW | *Associate Professor of Social Work, Simmons University*

Johanna E. Elumn, PhD, LMSW | *Assistant Professor, Yale School of Medicine/Public Health*

12:15 – 1:15 PM Lunch

EJI Legacy Hall | 608 N. Court Street, Montgomery, AL 36104

1:20 – 1:35 PM Reporting from the Margins: Justice, Poverty, and the South

How do the stories we tell shape the way we understand justice and poverty? This session explores what years of on-the-ground reporting and research reveal about incarceration, inequality, and marginalized communities across the South, and why that storytelling matters for policy and public understanding.

Speaker

Leah Nelson | *Journalist, Researcher & Policy Analyst*

1:40 – 2:10 PM Restoring the Vote: Civic Participation After Incarceration

What does it take to restore full citizenship after incarceration? This session examines the barriers formerly incarcerated people face in regaining the right to vote, and the advocacy, organizing, and legal work underway to expand civic participation and representation across Alabama and beyond.

Panelist

Evan Milligan | *Voting Rights Advocate & Attorney*

David Sadler | *Voting Rights Advocate & Organizer*

2:20 – 2:50 PM From the Inside Out: Advocacy, Reentry, and Community Support

What happens when advocacy is led by the people who've lived the experience? This session brings together legal, organizational, and municipal perspectives on reentry, from post-conviction advocacy to peer support to citywide community programs, to explore how collaboration across roles builds stronger pathways home.

Panelist

Carla Crowder | Executive Director, Alabama Appleseed

Ronald McKeithen | Re-entry Coordinator & Advocate, Alabama Appleseed

Alanah Melton | Director of Unhoused Strategies, City of Birmingham Mayor's Office

3:00 – 3:45 PM Storytelling and Sacred Care: Art and Advocacy Behind the Statistics

Behind every statistic is a person. This session explores two distinct forms of advocacy: using film, writing, and poetry to humanize lived experience, including a clip from the documentary *Born Captive*, and providing sacred, hands-on care to incarcerated and postpartum women through lactation support and doula work.

Panelist

Starling Thomas | Filmmaker, Writer & Poet

Chauntel Norris | Certified Lactation Counselor & Doula

3:50 – 4:50 PM From Incarceration to Leadership: Building Movements and Pathways to Empowerment

What does it mean to transform experiences of incarceration into leadership, advocacy, and community power? This conversation brings together system-impacted leaders who have experienced incarceration and come from different walks of life to share how they have turned personal experiences into pathways for change. Panelists will explore leadership development, grassroots organizing, health advocacy, and the power of creating opportunities for people returning home to lead, rebuild, and shape the movements and communities they are part of. Tamara Springs will open the session with a presentation before being joined by Callie Greer and Monya Saunders for a broader conversation.

Panelist

Tamara Springs | Training Manager, Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)

Callie Greer | Navigator/Community Organizer, Alabama Appleseed Center for Law and Justice

Monya Saunders | Community Health Worker, Transitions Clinic

5:00 PM Legacy Site Tours

Attendees will tour EJL's Legacy Sites, including the Legacy Museum, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, Freedom Monument Sculpture Park, and Montgomery Square. Dinner is on your own this evening.

7:00 – 9:00 PM | Film Screening: For Venida, For Kalief

Michelle Browder's Sculpture Studio | 513 N. Lawrence Street, Montgomery, AL 36104

Join us for a screening of Sisa Bueno's documentary *For Venida, For Kalief*, a poetic documentary from director Sisa Bueno, told through the words of Venida Brodnax Browder, Kalief's mother. Blending her poetry with archival footage and present-day advocacy, the film traces how one family's loss helped spark a movement, including the effort to transform Rikers Island, and honors their lasting impact on community and reform.

Day 3: Saturday, October 3

8:30 – 8:50 AM Welcome

EJI Legacy Hall | 608 N. Court Street, Montgomery, AL 36104

Michelle Browder and Stephen Browder

9:00 – 10:00 AM Keynote: The Hidden Public Health Crisis of Incarceration

Dr. Roger A. Mitchell, Jr. | *Forensic Pathologist & Former Chief Medical Examiner, Washington, D.C.*

Dr. Roger A. Mitchell, Jr. is a nationally recognized forensic pathologist, physician leader, educator, and advocate whose career has been dedicated to advancing public health, forensic medicine, violence prevention, and health equity. He served as Chief Medical Examiner for the District of Columbia from 2014–2021, and made history as the first forensic pathologist to simultaneously serve as Interim Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice in D.C. He is a past President of the National Medical Association, the nation's oldest and largest organization representing Black physicians and their patients.

10:05 – 11:05 AM The Human Cost of Solitary Confinement and Pretrial Detention

Kalief Browder's story exposed the devastating human cost of solitary confinement and pretrial detention, a loss felt not only by his family, but by society as a whole. This session pairs advocacy with storytelling, including clips from Sisa Bueno's film *For Venida, For Kalief*, followed by a conversation on the campaigns his story inspired to close Rikers Island and change how the justice system treats the presumption of innocence.

Panelist

Akeem Browder | *Founder, Shut Down Rikers & The Kalief Browder Foundation*

Sisa Bueno | *Producer-Director-Cinematographer*

11:10 AM – 12:10 PM Miller v. Alabama: From Childhood Sentences to Second Chances

What happens when a child is sentenced as though they have no possibility of change? This conversation explores the landmark *Miller v. Alabama* decision and its broader implications for youth sentenced to life without parole. Panelists will examine the significance of the case, the evolving understanding of childhood, accountability, and redemption, and the importance of creating pathways for people who were sentenced as children to reclaim their lives, return home, and contribute to their communities.

Panelist

James Jeter | *Criminal Justice Fellow, Propel Capital*

Ray Boyd | *Program Manager, New Visions for Public Safety, Yale Law School*

12:15 – 1:15 PM Lunch

EJI Legacy Hall | 608 N. Court Street, Montgomery, AL 36104

1:25 – 2:25 PM Investing in Change: Capital, Organizing, and Cross-Community Partnership

What does it take to build a broader coalition for decarceration? This session brings together an investor funding solutions that reduce incarceration, a leader organizing system-impacted people as agents of change, and a cross-community partner working to bridge racial justice work across communities.

Panelist

Chris Bentley | *Founder & Managing Partner, De-Carceration Fund*

Taylor Paul | *CEO, The League for Safer Streets*

Chris Lyon | *Senior Vice President-Director of Corporate Impact, Androscoggin Bank*

2:30 – 3:00 PM Building Lives, Reclaiming Space

What does it look like to build opportunity out of a former prison? This session explores how one advocate turned his own experience with incarceration into a mission of reducing recidivism, through direct services, policy advocacy, and reimagining the physical spaces of incarceration into spaces for reentry and growth.

Kerwin Pittman | Founder & Executive Director, RREPS (Recidivism Reduction Educational Program Services)

3:10 – 3:40 PM What Are the Action Steps We Need to Take

Alesha Judkins | FWD.us

TBD

3:45 – 4:15 PM Strategy Breakout Session

Attendees will break into small groups, each guided by a local leader, for a moment of reflection and hands-on strategy. This session gives participants space to share the work they're doing in their own communities, and to think through how they can and will apply what they've learned at the summit back into their work moving forward.

Facilitated by Local Leaders

6:30 – 8:00 PM Bus Pickup at Hotels

Shuttle buses depart hotels for the closing celebration.

Home2 Suites by Hilton Montgomery : 155 Columbus Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36104

Residence Inn by Marriott Montgomery: 400 North Perry Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36104

Evening Closing Concert and Dinner

More Than a Horse Farm | 2644 Kirksey Ave, Montgomery, AL 36104

More Than A Horse Farm sits on 17 acres along the Selma-to-Montgomery Trail and uses art, history, and horseback riding to heal children and mature riders alike. The summit closes here with a concert and dinner.

*Legacy Sites & Museums

Every summit ticket includes complimentary access to the following sites in Montgomery:

- **The Legacy Museum** — 115 Coosa St, Montgomery, AL 36104
- **The National Memorial for Peace and Justice** — 417 Caroline St, Montgomery, AL 36104
- **Freedom Monument Sculpture Park** — 831 Walker St, Montgomery, AL 36104
- **Montgomery Square** — Montgomery Street, next to the Elevation Convening Center and Hotel, Montgomery, AL (specific street number not published; located next to the Elevation Convening Center and Hotel)
- **The Mothers of Gynecology Monument & Museum** — 17 Mildred St, Montgomery, AL 36104

*Restaurants

We encourage you to support local, Montgomery-owned restaurants for dinner. It's a great way to give back to the community hosting us.

- **J.W. Beverette's Soul Food**, 1172 S Decatur St, Fri 11:00 AM–6:00 PM, small, casual soul food counter

- **Cork and Clever**, 2960A Zelda Road, Fri 11:00 AM-10:00 PM, Southern-inspired American gastropub cuisine
- **Pierce's Country Cooking**, 610 W Fairview Ave, Fri 7:00 AM–7:00 PM, homestyle Southern cooking, family-owned
- **Simply Southern Cafe**, 3905 Troy Hwy, Fri 11:00 AM–6:00 PM, home-style plates, popular with locals