

**EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

PARDON

BAYARD RUSTIN

The California Legislative Black and LGBTQ Caucuses requested posthumous pardon of Bayard Rustin, a humanitarian and civil rights icon.

On January 22, 1953, the Los Angeles County Superior Court convicted 41-year-old Mr. Rustin of a misdemeanor violation of Penal Code section 647.5 (vagrancy). The court sentenced Mr. Rustin to 60 days in jail and ordered him to register as a sex offender.

California, like much of the nation, has a disgraceful legacy of systematically discriminating against the LGBTQ community. This discrimination has taken many forms including social isolation and shaming, surveillance, intimidation, physical violence, and unjust arrest and prosecution. Mr. Rustin was sentenced pursuant to a charge commonly used to punish gay men for engaging in consensual adult sexual conduct. His conviction is part of a long and reprehensible history of criminal prohibitions on the very existence of LGBTQ people and their intimate associations and relationships.

Mr. Rustin, a visionary champion for peace, equality, and economic justice was a key strategist and organizer behind the 1963 March on Washington. He worked closely with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to organize the March and the Montgomery Bus Boycott. He was fundamental in integrating nonviolent direct action into the civil rights movement.

Mr. Rustin, a native of New York, traveled around the country and world to promote civil and human rights, and trained hundreds of people on nonviolence. While in California in 1942, he visited Japanese Americans imprisoned in the Manzanar internment camp and reported on the camp's humanitarian conditions. On August 8, 2013, President Barack Obama posthumously awarded Mr. Rustin the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest award in the United States, describing him as "an unyielding activist for civil rights, dignity, and equality for all."

Mr. Rustin was criminalized because of stigma, bias, and ignorance. With this act of executive clemency, I acknowledge the inherent injustice of this conviction, an injustice that was compounded by his political opponents' use of the record of this case to try to undermine him, his associates, and the civil rights movement.

By the laws of this state it is proper that I, as Governor of the State of California, give testimony that Mr. Rustin merits this posthumous pardon.

THEREFORE, I, GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor of the State of California, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and statutes of the State of California, do hereby grant to Mr. Rustin a full and unconditional posthumous pardon for the above case.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 4th day of February 2020.



GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor of California

ATTEST:

ALEX PADILLA
Secretary of State