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REPORT

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A data project analyzing U.S. prisoner's rights, children's rights, and media rights over a 22-year period.

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Executive Summary

Background

This is a capstone project for the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights John Lewis Young Leaders Fellowship that observes prisoner's rights, children's rights (child labor), and media rights (freedom of speech & press) in the United States on a national and subnational level. It is a collaborative effort with students and professors from the University of Rhode Island's Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies. This project was inspired by and uses components of the CIRIGHTS human rights dataset. This research was conducted to contribute to the ongoing discourse of human rights and spotlight the shortcomings in the hopes of assisting the United States with positive human rights development.

Methodology

Content analysis was used to examine reports from Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International and assigned a numerical score on a scale of 0-2 based on a set of scoring guidelines. In some instances, there were no annual reports on these rights. Under these circumstances, reports from Violation Tracker and U.S. Press Freedom Tracker that showed the actual number of violations committed were utilized and condensed into a 0-2 scaled based on the median. In this case, graphs were created in RStudio using the non-condensed numbers to create visuals.

9 sample states spanning across the United States were selected to analyze on a subnational level which include California, New York, Oregon, Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Georgia, Wisconsin, and Florida. These states were selected based on political leanings and geographical location along with just my general interest.

Collecting the data along with me was Zahra Khan and Jack Cox, trained students in content analysis from the Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies.

Key Findings

- Respect for prisoner's rights, children's rights (child labor) law & practice, and media rights (freedom of speech & press), remains relatively consistent from 2000- 2022.
- There is a significant lack of available information, reports, and data on these rights.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This project is a comprehensive analysis that observes prisoner's rights, children's rights (child labor), and media rights (freedom of speech & press) across the United States at both a national and subnational level. Spanning over 22 years with a representative selection of 9 sample states, this project conducts a thorough examination of the respect of these rights.

In an age where data-driven initiatives have become integral to decision-making processes, the intersection between data projects and human rights has gained significance. As data-driven approaches increasingly shape policies, interventions, and societal mechanisms, it becomes imperative to analyze the trends in human rights respect in this way.

The overall goal of this project is to highlight the shortcomings and successes of the United States in its human rights practices. The aim is to provide NGOs', policymakers, scholars, activists, and the public with information on human rights in the United States and aid evidence-based policymaking.

This report acknowledges both the positive contributions and limitations in integrating data-driven approaches. It encourages dialogue, reflection, and actionable insights to align future data initiatives with evolving human rights implications in the United States. We encourage others to provide actionable insights and constructive feedback towards developments of future data projects.

Recognizing the U.S. as a global leader in human rights, we believe it is important that the United States is being held to the same standards as other OECD (The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries. It is vital that violations within the United States are recognized as it will push for further advancements in human rights within its borders.

More information on this project can be found on our website:
<https://sites.google.com/rfkhumanrights.org/u-s-a-unveiled/home>

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this project are to:

- Provide NGOs', policymakers, scholars, activists, and the public with information on human rights in the United States.
- Aid evidence-based policymaking.
- Highlight the shortcomings and successes of the United States in its human rights practices.

2 Methodology

2.1 Research Focus

The rights focused on for this project are:

- Prisoner's rights
- Children's Rights (Child Labor) Law & Practice
- Media rights (Freedom of Press)

2.2 Research Design

This project uses content analysis, a recognized form of data collection within the social sciences. It involves examining and interpreting the content within materials to identify patterns, themes, and meanings. Content analysis was performed on annual reports from Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International from 2000-2022 and assigned a number based on a set of scoring guidelines to look for patterns and themes, turning it into numerical data. Each right is scored on a scale of 0-2 with 0 being a significant number of violations and 2 meaning no violations.

This scoring scheme primarily derives from the CIRIGHTS human rights data project guidelines. However, given the significant lack of available information on the United States, it has been necessary to adapt them accordingly.

Reports from Violation Tracker and U.S. Press Freedom Tracker were also used on a subnational level to gather scores. These reports showed the actual number of violations committed rather than a qualitative report. These numbers were utilized and condensed into a 0-2 scaled based on the median. I further utilized these resources by putting the initial non-condensed state numbers into RStudio to create a graph for a better visual representation of annual human rights respect. All the resources used are publicly accessible and can be replicated.

Furthermore, when analyzing reports from Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, the year in the report title refers to the previous year. Hence, the years listed in the tables reflect the time period being reported on, not the year when the report was published.

2.3 Sample

Along with analyzing the United States as a whole, a sample of 9 U.S. states were selected based on their geographic diversity, political duality, and general interest. These states are California, Oregon, New York, Texas, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, Wisconsin, and Oklahoma. These states were selected based off political leanings, geographical location, and general interest. To showcase states of all political leanings, this study included three states that are primarily democrat, three primarily republican states, and three swing states. Furthermore, this study included states spanning across the country and on both coasts.

2.4 Data Collection

Fellow coders, Zahra Khan and Jack Cox, are students from the University of Rhode Island's Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies and are experts trained in content analysis for human rights. Multiple coders ensured inter-coder reliability and replicable scores.

2.5 Data Analysis

This data was analyzed and graphed using RStudio.

2.6 Limitations

One of the primary limitations of this research project is the scarcity of existing relevant information and reports on these rights. Despite efforts, certain aspects of prisoner's rights, children's rights (child labor), and media rights (freedom of speech & press) may not have been adequately explored. This limitation may have affected the outcome of the scores.

Another limitation of this research project is the small sample size used for subnational analysis. Consequently, the findings may not provide generalizable insights for human rights violations and their relation to population size and political demographic.

A third limitation of this project is the reliance on external reports that could introduce biases and overlook the complexities within each human rights issue. Bias in the reports may not fully capture the depth of exploitation and abuse endured by these populations. Furthermore, because the reports used to conduct content analysis were international human rights reports, they generally lacked subnational information. However, this was necessary due to the lack of state level reports on these rights.

3 Results

3.1 Prisoner's Rights

Prisoner's rights are acknowledged and recognized by The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The scoring guidelines used in this project are reflective of these rights and allow for a comprehensive analysis of the respect for them in the United States. The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world. Conditions within U.S. prisons do not reflect the standards in other democratic nations, which is why it is important to track them. The criteria used is based on the CIRIGHT's definition of prisoner's rights.

Prisoner's rights criteria within the context of this data project include:

- Protection from torture, sexual assault, and prison guard brutality. Prisoners should not be subjected to prolonged solitary confinement, placed in a dark or constantly lit cell, corporal punishment or reduction of diet or water, or collective punishment. Restraints are only applied for disciplinary offenses.
- No discrimination.
- Conditions that promote rehabilitation, services such as education, religion, vocational training, and work are offered.
- Separation based on gender, age, criminal record, and reason for detention.
- Proper sanitary installations.
- Food with nutritional value and drinking water prepared at "usual hours."
- Healthcare provided by the state at the same standards available in the community including prenatal and postnatal care and feminine hygiene products.
- Prisoners are kept clean and properly maintained with access to open air, physical exercise, light, ventilation, and reasonable temperature.
- Family contact should not be prohibited as a disciplinary sanction.
- All prisons should keep records of prisoners.
- No imprisonment without a valid commitment order.
- Prisoners are informed of rights upon entrance.
- A central authority overlooking prisons.

Prisoner's rights were scored on a scale of 0-2 with 0 being no respect and 2 being the most respect.

- If eight or more criteria are violated, then that year receives a 0.
- If seven or less criteria are violated, then that year receives a 1.
- If no criteria are violated, then that year receives a 2.

Additionally, on a subnational level, if we saw legislative development and there were no violations recorded, that year received a 2 to track positive reforms.

When coding, the following aspects were also included:

- Mental health as health care.
- Conditions in pretrial detention.
- Individuals under 18 being held in adult prisons and not juvenile detention as a violation against the separation of adults and children.
- Guantanamo Bay. This is because it is a sovereign U.S. territory and is the U.S government detaining people on some charge, often no charge, and subjecting them to

tortuous conditions. CIRIGHTS made the decision to only look at violations by the government within the territory of the state, but I believe this withholds accountability.

3.1.1 National Prisoner's Rights

To score prisoner's rights in the United States, I used annual Human Rights Watch World Reports and Amnesty International reports. Reports on national prisoner's rights are available from 2000-2022. Every year was scored as a 1. Some years had more violations than others, but no year reached more than eight violations and lacked any substantive change despite the hundreds of protests and calls for reform.

Table 1 National Prisoner's Rights

| YEAR | prison_rights |
|------|---------------|
| 2000 | 1 |
| 2001 | 1 |
| 2002 | 1 |
| 2003 | 1 |
| 2004 | 1 |
| 2005 | 1 |
| 2006 | 1 |
| 2007 | 1 |
| 2008 | 1 |
| 2009 | 1 |
| 2010 | 1 |
| 2011 | 1 |
| 2012 | 1 |
| 2013 | 1 |
| 2014 | 1 |
| 2015 | 1 |
| 2016 | 1 |
| 2017 | 1 |
| 2018 | 1 |
| 2019 | 1 |
| 2020 | 1 |
| 2021 | 1 |
| 2022 | 1 |

The main consistencies noticed when reading the reports were sexual violence, extreme overcrowding, lack of consequences for guards engaging in abusive behavior, malicious use of excessive force, underfunding, shackling of pregnant inmates, lack of rehabilitation and mental health resources, and overall degrading conditions. Additionally, the Human Rights Watch World Reports stopped giving consistent information about prison conditions in 2017. This is important because a lack of reporting on prison conditions results in a loss of awareness, information, and accountability.

3.1.2 Subnational Prisoner's Rights

It became increasingly challenging investigating the 9 sample states, as no annual state-level reports on prison conditions exist. Consequently, I had to depend on references to specific states in international reports from Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. The subnational commonalities mirrored those on a national level and highlights include a lack of mental health care and cruel and inhumane conditions.

Among the sample states, California and New York were the most mentioned in international reports. For instance, the 2006 Human Rights Watch World Report writes that "...the state killed one inmate per week through medical incompetence or neglect. Poor mental health care can also be fatal. For example, a paranoid schizophrenic jail inmate hanged himself in May 2005 after having not received any anti-psychotic or antidepressant medication for seven days." ²

The 2008 HRW World Report mentioned, "In California, a federal judge found that medical care in the state's prisons violated the US Constitution's prohibition on cruel and unusual punishment...In September 2007 the receiver issued a report finding that 15 percent of California prisoner deaths were either preventable or possible preventable." ²

Another commonality noticed was the extreme pain that inmates go through during execution. Examples include the 2016 Human Rights Watch World Report where in Oklahoma, “Two prisoners...Clayton Lockett and Michael Wilson—showed visible signs of distress as they died.”² Another instance of this was reported in Amnesty’s 2007 annual report that called out Florida, stating, “The execution required 34 minutes and two doses of the drugs to kill Angel Diaz. Witnesses described Angel Diaz grimacing in pain and gasping for air during the execution.”¹ This is not something that is often reported on or widely known, so there is value in reporting it.

Another notable inmate experience in the Human Rights Watch 2007 World Report that highlighted Wisconsin stated, “...he was stripped of clothes and bedding, confined to a small bare cell and fed only ground-up food formed into a ‘loaf’.”²

Despite the significant absence of subnational information, there were instances of legislative improvements or attempts to enact progressive legislation for prisoner’s rights in California, New York, Texas, and Georgia, starting around 2012. This legislation mostly focused on reforms in solitary confinement. Furthermore, these efforts awarded them a score of 2 for these years where advancements were emphasized, and no additional violations were reported.

California

| YEAR | prison_rights |
|-------------|----------------------|
| 2000 | 1 |
| 2001 | 1 |
| 2002 | 1 |
| 2003 | N/A |
| 2004 | N/A |
| 2005 | 1 |
| 2006 | 1 |
| 2007 | 1 |
| 2008 | N/A |
| 2009 | 1 |
| 2010 | 2 |
| 2011 | 1 |
| 2012 | 2 |
| 2013 | 1 |
| 2014 | 1 |
| 2015 | 1 |
| 2016 | N/A |
| 2017 | N/A |
| 2018 | 2 |
| 2019 | N/A |
| 2020 | N/A |
| 2021 | N/A |
| 2022 | N/A |

Table 2 California Prisoner's Rights**New York**

| YEAR | prison_rights |
|-------------|----------------------|
| 2000 | 1 |
| 2001 | N/A |
| 2002 | 1 |
| 2003 | N/A |
| 2004 | N/A |
| 2005 | 2 |
| 2006 | 1 |
| 2007 | N/A |
| 2008 | N/A |
| 2009 | 1 |
| 2010 | 1 |
| 2011 | N/A |
| 2012 | N/A |
| 2013 | 2 |
| 2014 | 2 |
| 2015 | 2 |
| 2016 | 2 |
| 2017 | N/A |
| 2018 | N/A |
| 2019 | N/A |
| 2020 | 2 |
| 2021 | N/A |
| 2022 | N/A |

Table 3 New York Prisoner's Rights

Oregon

| YEAR | prison_rights |
|-------------|----------------------|
| 2000 | N/A |
| 2001 | N/A |
| 2002 | N/A |
| 2003 | N/A |
| 2004 | N/A |
| 2005 | N/A |
| 2006 | N/A |
| 2007 | N/A |
| 2008 | N/A |
| 2009 | N/A |
| 2010 | N/A |
| 2011 | N/A |
| 2012 | N/A |
| 2013 | N/A |
| 2014 | N/A |
| 2015 | N/A |
| 2016 | N/A |
| 2017 | N/A |
| 2018 | N/A |
| 2019 | N/A |
| 2020 | N/A |
| 2021 | N/A |
| 2022 | N/A |

Table 4 Oregon Prisoner's Rights**Texas**

| YEAR | prison_rights |
|-------------|----------------------|
| 2000 | N/A |
| 2001 | N/A |
| 2002 | N/A |
| 2003 | N/A |
| 2004 | N/A |
| 2005 | N/A |
| 2006 | N/A |
| 2007 | N/A |
| 2008 | N/A |
| 2009 | N/A |
| 2010 | N/A |
| 2011 | 1 |
| 2012 | N/A |
| 2013 | N/A |
| 2014 | N/A |
| 2015 | N/A |
| 2016 | N/A |
| 2017 | N/A |
| 2018 | N/A |
| 2019 | N/A |
| 2020 | 2 |
| 2021 | N/A |
| 2022 | N/A |

Table 5 Texas Prisoner's Rights

Arkansas

| YEAR | prison_rights |
|-------------|----------------------|
| 2000 | N/A |
| 2001 | 1 |
| 2002 | N/A |
| 2003 | 1 |
| 2004 | 1 |
| 2005 | N/A |
| 2006 | N/A |
| 2007 | N/A |
| 2008 | N/A |
| 2009 | N/A |
| 2010 | N/A |
| 2011 | N/A |
| 2012 | N/A |
| 2013 | N/A |
| 2014 | N/A |
| 2015 | N/A |
| 2016 | N/A |
| 2017 | N/A |
| 2018 | N/A |
| 2019 | N/A |
| 2020 | N/A |
| 2021 | N/A |
| 2022 | N/A |

Table 6 Arkansas Prisoner's Rights**Oklahoma**

| YEAR | prison_rights |
|-------------|----------------------|
| 2000 | N/A |
| 2001 | N/A |
| 2002 | N/A |
| 2003 | N/A |
| 2004 | N/A |
| 2005 | N/A |
| 2006 | N/A |
| 2007 | N/A |
| 2008 | N/A |
| 2009 | N/A |
| 2010 | N/A |
| 2011 | N/A |
| 2012 | N/A |
| 2013 | N/A |
| 2014 | N/A |
| 2015 | 1 |
| 2016 | N/A |
| 2017 | N/A |
| 2018 | 1 |
| 2019 | N/A |
| 2020 | N/A |
| 2021 | N/A |
| 2022 | N/A |

Table 7 Oklahoma Prisoner's Rights

Georgia

| YEAR | prison_rights |
|-------------|----------------------|
| 2000 | N/A |
| 2001 | N/A |
| 2002 | 1 |
| 2003 | N/A |
| 2004 | N/A |
| 2005 | N/A |
| 2006 | N/A |
| 2007 | N/A |
| 2008 | N/A |
| 2009 | N/A |
| 2010 | N/A |
| 2011 | N/A |
| 2012 | N/A |
| 2013 | N/A |
| 2014 | N/A |
| 2015 | N/A |
| 2016 | N/A |
| 2017 | N/A |
| 2018 | N/A |
| 2019 | N/A |
| 2020 | N/A |
| 2021 | N/A |
| 2022 | N/A |

Table 8 Georgia Prisoner's Rights

Wisconsin

| YEAR | prison_rights |
|-------------|----------------------|
| 2000 | N/A |
| 2001 | 1 |
| 2002 | 1 |
| 2003 | N/A |
| 2004 | N/A |
| 2005 | N/A |
| 2006 | 1 |
| 2007 | N/A |
| 2008 | N/A |
| 2009 | N/A |
| 2010 | N/A |
| 2011 | N/A |
| 2012 | N/A |
| 2013 | N/A |
| 2014 | N/A |
| 2015 | N/A |
| 2016 | N/A |
| 2017 | N/A |
| 2018 | N/A |
| 2019 | N/A |
| 2020 | N/A |
| 2021 | N/A |
| 2022 | N/A |

Table 9 Wisconsin Prisoner's Rights

Florida

| YEAR | prison_rights |
|-------------|----------------------|
| 2000 | N/A |
| 2001 | 1 |
| 2002 | N/A |
| 2003 | 1 |
| 2004 | 1 |
| 2005 | N/A |
| 2006 | 1 |
| 2007 | N/A |
| 2008 | N/A |
| 2009 | N/A |
| 2010 | N/A |
| 2011 | N/A |
| 2012 | N/A |
| 2013 | N/A |
| 2014 | 1 |

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| 2015 | N/A |
| 2016 | N/A |
| 2017 | N/A |
| 2018 | N/A |
| 2019 | N/A |
| 2020 | N/A |
| 2021 | N/A |
| 2022 | N/A |

Table 10 Florida Prisoner's Rights

3.2 Children's Rights (Child Labor)

Child labor persists as a global issue, yet it is frequently overlooked in the United States where agricultural regulations are more lenient, and oversight of violations is limited.

The right to be protected from child labor is recognized as a fundamental human right in various institutions, such as the UNCRC and the ILO. The right to be protected from child labor affirms the right of children to be protected from labor exploitation and performing work that is hazardous, or interferes with their education, health, or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development (United Nations). The criteria used is based on the CIRIGHT's definition of children's rights.

Children's rights criteria within the context of this data project include:

- Children under the age of 14 prohibited from employment in any undertaking.
- Minimum age for working in dangerous occupations is 18.
- Minimum age for working at night (midnight – 6:00 AM) is 18.
- Children of school age prohibited from being employed during normal school hours.

Children's rights for both law and practice were scored on a scale of 0-2 with 0 being no respect and 2 being the most respect.

- If three or more criteria are violated, then that year receives a 0.
- If one or two criteria are violated, then that year receives a 1.
- If no criteria are violated, then that year receives a 2.

Additionally, on a subnational level, if there were no recorded violations for a specific year in a state, then that year received a 2 to highlight progress.

3.2.1 National Children's Rights Law & Practice

To score child labor laws in the United States, I used the U.S. Department of Labor's Historical Tables Applicable to Agricultural Employment. Information was available beginning in 2004. To score national child labor practice, I used annual Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International reports. Only 10 years of reports referenced child labor practices in the United States. Nationally, every year received a score of 0 for law and every year received a score of 0 for practice except in 2001.

Federal regulations specify that the minimum working age is 12 with parental consent, minors under 18 are not restricted from working during regular school hours, and the

minimum age for nighttime and hazardous work is set at 16 years old. Furthermore, farmworker children are specifically exempt from minimum age and maximum hour requirements under the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act.²

Table 11 National Child Labor Law & Practice

| YEAR | child_l | child_p |
|------|---------|---------|
| 2000 | N/A | 0 |
| 2001 | N/A | 1 |
| 2002 | N/A | N/A |
| 2003 | N/A | N/A |
| 2004 | 0 | N/A |
| 2005 | 0 | N/A |
| 2006 | 0 | N/A |
| 2007 | 0 | N/A |
| 2008 | 0 | N/A |
| 2009 | 0 | 0 |
| 2010 | 0 | 0 |
| 2011 | 0 | 0 |
| 2012 | 0 | 0 |
| 2013 | 0 | 0 |
| 2014 | 0 | 0 |
| 2015 | 0 | 0 |
| 2016 | 0 | 0 |
| 2017 | 0 | N/A |
| 2018 | 0 | N/A |
| 2019 | 0 | N/A |
| 2020 | 0 | N/A |
| 2021 | 0 | N/A |
| 2022 | 0 | N/A |

The most common observations were a lack of federal protections for child farm workers, a variety of injuries and illness from pesticides, heat exposure, hazardous machinery, and elevated rates of school dropout. Human Rights Watch World Report 2001 states, “Even to the limited extent that U.S. laws did protect farmworker children, they were not adequately enforced.”²

3.2.2 Subnational Children’s Rights Law & Practice

To score subnational child labor law, I used the U.S. Department of Labor’s Historical Tables Applicable to Agricultural Employment. Information was available beginning in 2004. Some states did not have listed laws which indicated agricultural employment was either exempt or not listed. These states automatically received a 0 because if there are no specific protections against child labor, it can be assumed that there is child labor occurring.

To score subnational child labor practice, I used Violation Tracker. Information was available for all 22 years. Violation Tracker provided actual numbers of violations rather than descriptions. This enabled me to create graphs (Figures 1 – 10) reflecting the actual number of reported violations

over 22 years. I also condensed these numbers on a scale of 0-2 for the sake of consistency.

When condensing these numbers, I took the median (13) number of violations and used that to adapt the scoring guidelines where:

- If thirteen or more violations occurred, then that year received a 0.
- If one – twelve violations occurred, then that year received a 1.
- If no violations occurred, then that year received a received a 2.

It is important to note that this way of coding does not follow the CIRIGHTS methodology because the CIRGHTS coding scheme uses qualitative data and Violation Tracker provided quantitative data.

The state level laws proved more lenient, with Oregon setting the minimum age to work at just 9 years old and many other states setting the minimum age to 12.

Subnationally, every state besides Florida and Arkansas (that received all 1's) all scored a 0 for each year in law. The main difference between states that scored a 1 versus a 0, were the age laws regarding nighttime work. Furthermore, all subnational violations reported were either wage or hour violations. The Human Rights Watch 2010 World Report stated, "Federal protections that do exist are often not enforced and state child labor laws vary in strength and enforcement. As a result, child farmworkers, most of whom are Latino, often work 12-and-14-hour days, and risk pesticide poisoning, heat illness, injuries, and life-long disabilities. Many drop out of school; girls are sometimes subject to sexual harassment." ²

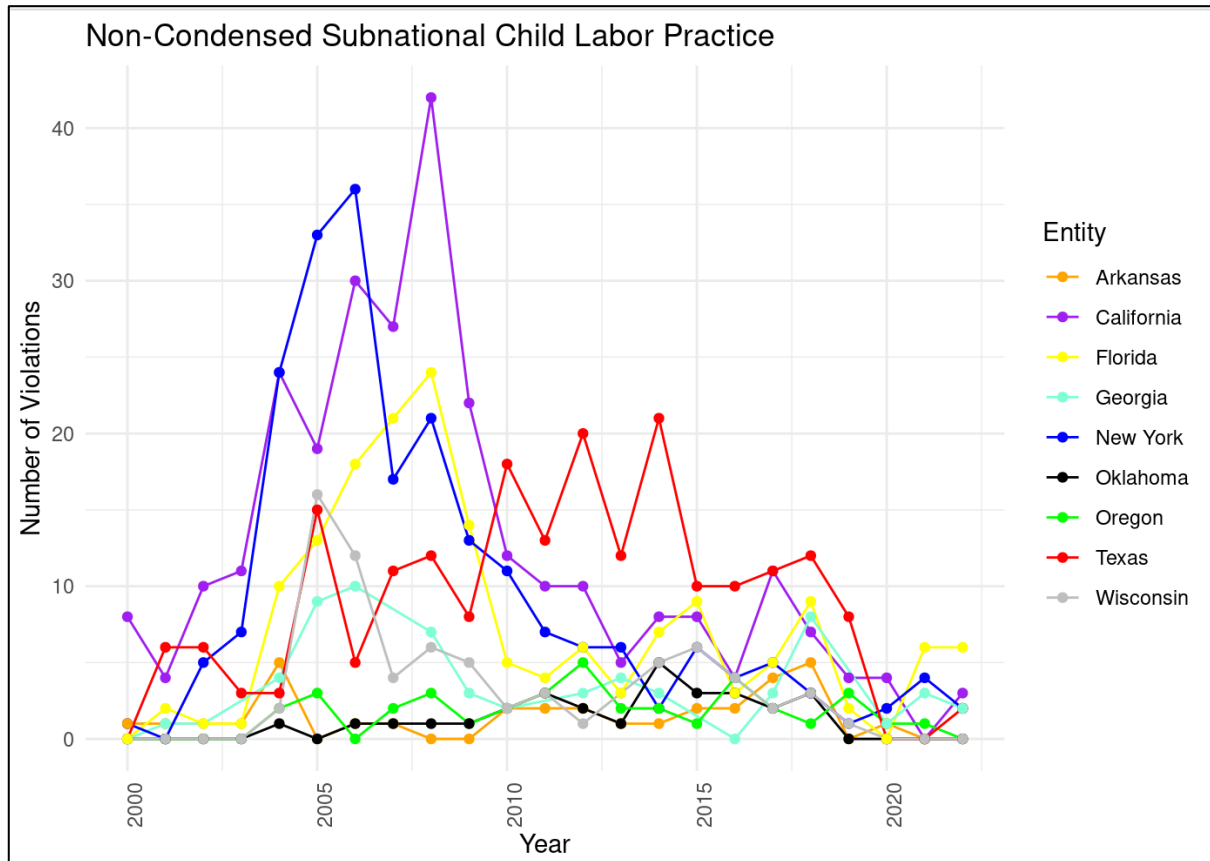


Figure 1 Subnational Child Labor Practice (Non-Condensed)

Figure 1 showcases the recorded subnational child labor violations for the 9 states over the course of 22 years using Violation Tracker.

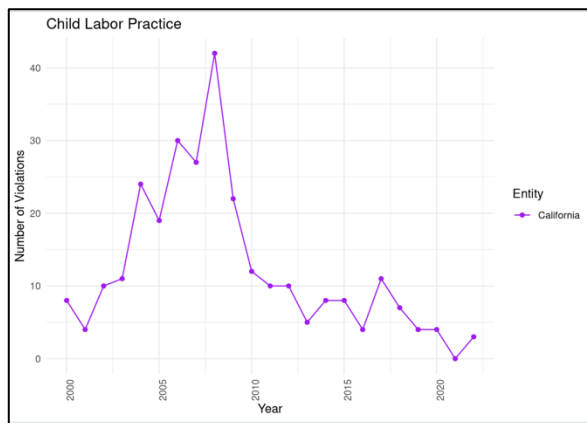
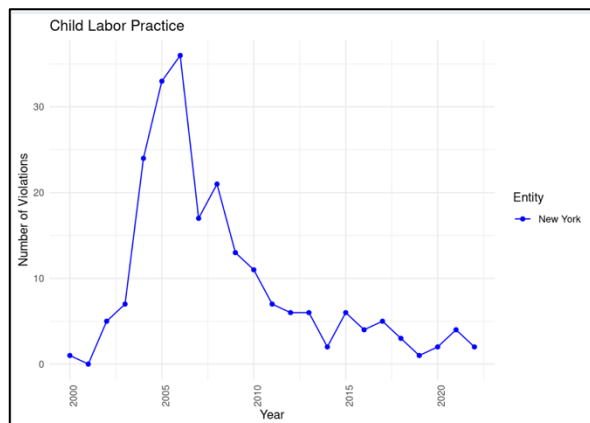
Tables 12 – 20 show the subnational condensed state numbers.

California

| YEAR | child_l | child_p |
|------|---------|---------|
| 2000 | N/A | 1 |
| 2001 | N/A | 1 |
| 2002 | N/A | 1 |
| 2003 | N/A | 1 |
| 2004 | 0 | 0 |
| 2005 | 0 | 0 |
| 2006 | 0 | 0 |
| 2007 | 0 | 0 |
| 2008 | 0 | 0 |
| 2009 | 0 | 0 |
| 2010 | 0 | 1 |
| 2011 | 0 | 1 |
| 2012 | 0 | 1 |
| 2013 | 0 | 1 |
| 2014 | 0 | 1 |
| 2015 | 0 | 1 |
| 2016 | 0 | 1 |
| 2017 | 0 | 1 |
| 2018 | 0 | 1 |
| 2019 | 0 | 1 |
| 2020 | 0 | 1 |
| 2021 | 0 | 2 |
| 2022 | 0 | 1 |

Table 12 California Child Labor Law & Practice**New York**

| YEAR | child_l | child_p |
|------|---------|---------|
| 2000 | N/A | 1 |
| 2001 | N/A | 2 |
| 2002 | N/A | 1 |
| 2003 | N/A | 1 |
| 2004 | 0 | 0 |
| 2005 | 0 | 0 |
| 2006 | 0 | 0 |
| 2007 | 0 | 0 |
| 2008 | 0 | 0 |
| 2009 | 0 | 0 |
| 2010 | 0 | 1 |
| 2011 | 0 | 1 |
| 2012 | 0 | 1 |
| 2013 | 0 | 1 |
| 2014 | 0 | 1 |
| 2015 | 0 | 1 |
| 2016 | 0 | 1 |
| 2017 | 0 | 1 |
| 2018 | 0 | 1 |
| 2019 | 0 | 1 |
| 2020 | 0 | 1 |
| 2021 | 0 | 1 |
| 2022 | 0 | 1 |

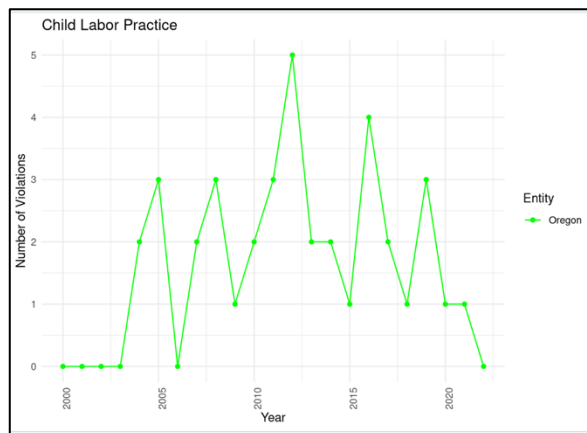
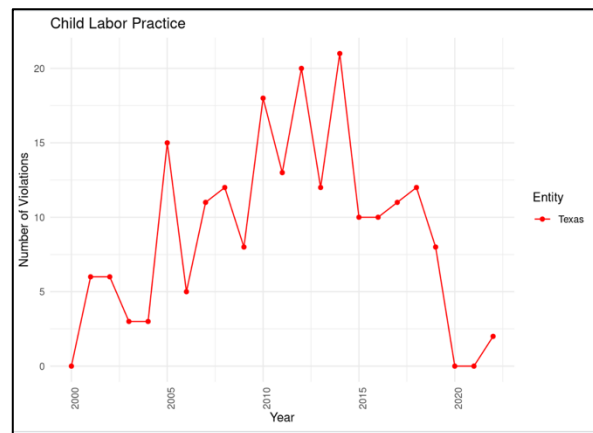
Table 13 New York Child Labor Law & Practice**Figure 2 California Child Labor Practice (Non-Condensed)****Figure 3 New York Child Labor Practice (Non-Condensed)**

Oregon

| YEAR | child_l | child_p |
|------|---------|---------|
| 2000 | N/A | 2 |
| 2001 | N/A | 2 |
| 2002 | N/A | 2 |
| 2003 | N/A | 2 |
| 2004 | 0 | 1 |
| 2005 | 0 | 1 |
| 2006 | 0 | 2 |
| 2007 | 0 | 1 |
| 2008 | 0 | 1 |
| 2009 | 0 | 1 |
| 2010 | 0 | 1 |
| 2011 | 0 | 1 |
| 2012 | 0 | 1 |
| 2013 | 0 | 1 |
| 2014 | 0 | 1 |
| 2015 | 0 | 1 |
| 2016 | 0 | 1 |
| 2017 | 0 | 1 |
| 2018 | 0 | 1 |
| 2019 | 0 | 1 |
| 2020 | 0 | 1 |
| 2021 | 0 | 1 |
| 2022 | 0 | 2 |

Table 14 Oregon Child Labor Law & Practice**Texas**

| YEAR | child_l | child_p |
|------|---------|---------|
| 2000 | N/A | 2 |
| 2001 | N/A | 1 |
| 2002 | N/A | 1 |
| 2003 | N/A | 1 |
| 2004 | 0 | 1 |
| 2005 | 0 | 0 |
| 2006 | 0 | 1 |
| 2007 | 0 | 1 |
| 2008 | 0 | 1 |
| 2009 | 0 | 1 |
| 2010 | 0 | 0 |
| 2011 | 0 | 0 |
| 2012 | 0 | 0 |
| 2013 | 0 | 1 |
| 2014 | 0 | 0 |
| 2015 | 0 | 1 |
| 2016 | 0 | 1 |
| 2017 | 0 | 1 |
| 2018 | 0 | 1 |
| 2019 | 0 | 1 |
| 2020 | 0 | 2 |
| 2021 | 0 | 2 |
| 2022 | 0 | 1 |

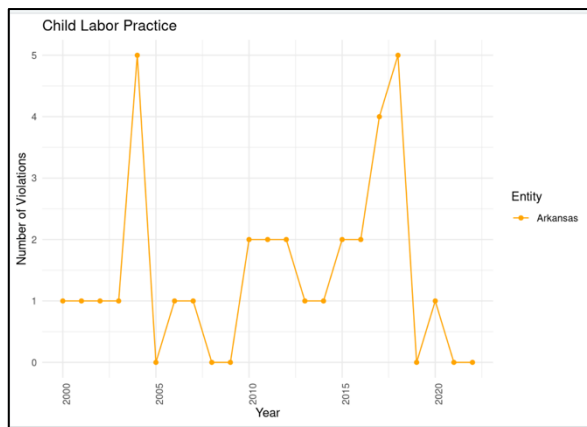
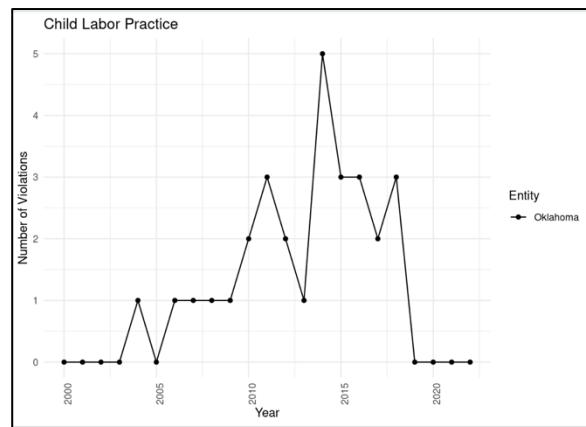
Table 15 Texas Child Labor Law & Practice**Figure 4 Oregon Child Labor Practice (Non-Condensed)****Figure 5 Texas Child Labor Practice (Non-Condensed)**

Arkansas

| YEAR | child_l | child_p |
|------|---------|---------|
| 2000 | N/A | 1 |
| 2001 | N/A | 1 |
| 2002 | N/A | 1 |
| 2003 | N/A | 1 |
| 2004 | 1 | 1 |
| 2005 | 1 | 2 |
| 2006 | 1 | 1 |
| 2007 | 1 | 1 |
| 2008 | 1 | 2 |
| 2009 | 1 | 2 |
| 2010 | 1 | 1 |
| 2011 | 1 | 1 |
| 2012 | 1 | 1 |
| 2013 | 1 | 1 |
| 2014 | 1 | 1 |
| 2015 | 1 | 1 |
| 2016 | 1 | 1 |
| 2017 | 1 | 1 |
| 2018 | 1 | 1 |
| 2019 | 1 | 2 |
| 2020 | 1 | 1 |
| 2021 | 1 | 2 |
| 2022 | 1 | 2 |

Table 16 Arkansas Child Labor Law & Practice**Oklahoma**

| YEAR | child_l | child_p |
|------|---------|---------|
| 2000 | N/A | 2 |
| 2001 | N/A | 2 |
| 2002 | N/A | 2 |
| 2003 | N/A | 2 |
| 2004 | 0 | 1 |
| 2005 | 0 | 2 |
| 2006 | 0 | 1 |
| 2007 | 0 | 1 |
| 2008 | 0 | 1 |
| 2009 | 0 | 1 |
| 2010 | 0 | 1 |
| 2011 | 0 | 1 |
| 2012 | 0 | 1 |
| 2013 | 0 | 1 |
| 2014 | 0 | 1 |
| 2015 | 0 | 1 |
| 2016 | 0 | 1 |
| 2017 | 0 | 1 |
| 2018 | 0 | 1 |
| 2019 | 0 | 1 |
| 2020 | 0 | 2 |
| 2021 | 0 | 2 |
| 2022 | 0 | 2 |

Table 17 Oklahoma Child Labor Law & Practice**Figure 6 Arkansas Child Labor Practice (Non-Condensed)****Figure 7 Oklahoma Child Labor Practice (Non-Condensed)**

Georgia

| YEAR | child_l | child_p |
|------|---------|---------|
| 2000 | N/A | 2 |
| 2001 | N/A | 1 |
| 2002 | N/A | 1 |
| 2003 | N/A | 1 |
| 2004 | 0 | 1 |
| 2005 | 0 | 1 |
| 2006 | 0 | 1 |
| 2007 | 0 | 1 |
| 2008 | 0 | 1 |
| 2009 | 0 | 1 |
| 2010 | 0 | 1 |
| 2011 | 0 | 1 |
| 2012 | 0 | 1 |
| 2013 | 0 | 1 |
| 2014 | 0 | 1 |
| 2015 | 0 | 1 |
| 2016 | 0 | 2 |
| 2017 | 0 | 1 |
| 2018 | 0 | 1 |
| 2019 | 0 | 1 |
| 2020 | 0 | 1 |
| 2021 | 0 | 1 |
| 2022 | 0 | 1 |

Table 18 Georgia Child Labor Law & Practice

Wisconsin

| YEAR | child_l | child_p |
|------|---------|---------|
| 2000 | N/A | 2 |
| 2001 | N/A | 2 |
| 2002 | N/A | 2 |
| 2003 | N/A | 2 |
| 2004 | 0 | 1 |
| 2005 | 0 | 0 |
| 2006 | 0 | 1 |
| 2007 | 0 | 1 |
| 2008 | 0 | 1 |
| 2009 | 0 | 1 |
| 2010 | 0 | 1 |
| 2011 | 0 | 1 |
| 2012 | 0 | 1 |
| 2013 | 0 | 1 |
| 2014 | 0 | 1 |
| 2015 | 0 | 1 |
| 2016 | 0 | 1 |
| 2017 | 0 | 1 |
| 2018 | 0 | 1 |
| 2019 | 0 | 1 |
| 2020 | 0 | 2 |
| 2021 | 0 | 2 |
| 2022 | 0 | 2 |

Table 19 Wisconsin Child Labor Law & Practice

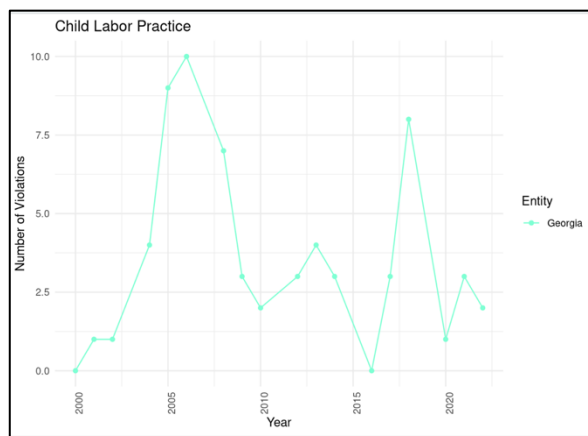


Figure 8 Georgia Child Labor Practice (Non-Condensed)

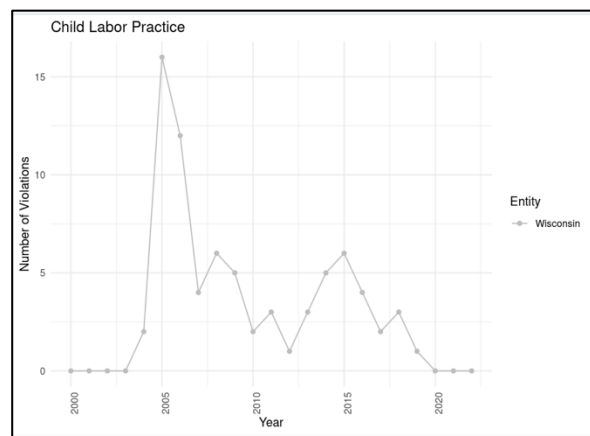
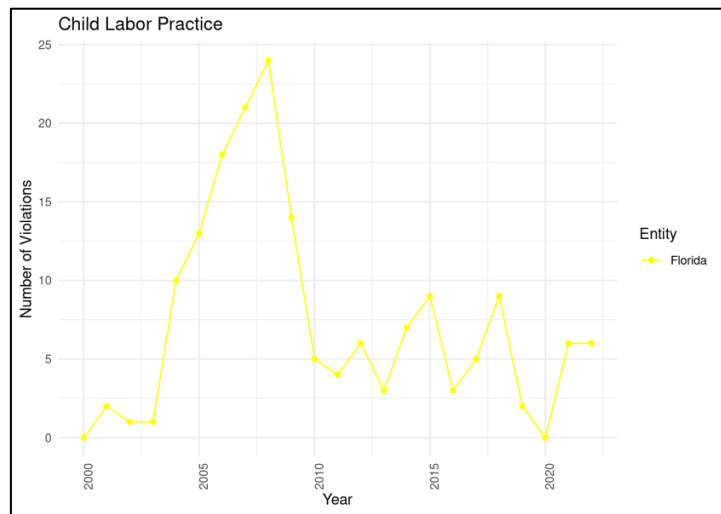


Figure 9 Wisconsin Child Labor Practice (Non-Condensed)

Florida

| YEAR | child_l | child_p |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| 2000 | N/A | 2 |
| 2001 | N/A | 1 |
| 2002 | N/A | 1 |
| 2003 | N/A | 1 |
| 2004 | 1 | 1 |
| 2005 | 1 | 0 |
| 2006 | 1 | 0 |
| 2007 | 1 | 0 |
| 2008 | 1 | 0 |
| 2009 | 1 | 0 |
| 2010 | 1 | 1 |
| 2011 | 1 | 1 |
| 2012 | 1 | 1 |
| 2013 | 1 | 1 |
| 2014 | 1 | 1 |
| 2015 | 1 | 1 |
| 2016 | 1 | 1 |
| 2017 | 1 | 1 |
| 2018 | 1 | 1 |
| 2019 | 1 | 1 |
| 2020 | 1 | 2 |
| 2021 | 1 | 1 |
| 2022 | 1 | 1 |

Table 20 Florida Child Labor Law & Practice**Figure 4 Florida Child Labor Practice (Non-Condensed)**

3.3 Media Rights (Freedom of Speech & Press)

Media rights are acknowledged and recognized by The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Media rights safeguard the freedom and protection of individuals and entities involved in the media industry. This variable examines the extent to which freedoms of speech and press are affected by government censorship. Censorship is any restriction that is placed on freedom of press, speech, or expression. It limits or prevents the media from expressing views challenging the policies of the existing government. Targets against journalists are defined as any kind of attack aimed at suppressing or impeding their work and undermining their role in informing the public.

Media rights criteria within the context of this data project include:

- The government and/or government officials should not limit or prevent the media from expressing views challenging the policies or actions of the existing government or government officials.
- Everyone has the right to speak freely and to print opposing opinions without being hindered, targeted, or impeded by the government.
- Journalists should not be subject to physical targets such as violence, harassment, or intimidation.
- Journalists should not be subjected to non-physical targets. Examples of this include arrests/criminal charges, assaults, equipment damage, and subpoena/legal orders.
- Abuse of power by government officials with the aim of restricting speech.
- Journalists should have the right to carry out their work without fear.

The CIRIGHTS coding guidelines under freedom of speech and press do NOT consider attacks on journalists. However, this project considers harassment, denigration, and attacks against journalists to be a threat to the freedom of press and a violation of media rights. Therefore, I had to modify those guidelines to reflect that belief.

Media rights was scored on a scale of 0-2 with 0 being no respect and 2 being the most respect.

- If all criteria are violated, and/or if violations are widespread, then that year receives a 0.
- If some criteria are violated, and/or there are moderate violations, then that year receives a 1.
- If no criteria are violated, then that year receives a 2.

On a subnational level, if there were no recorded incidents for a specific year in a state, then that year received a 2 to highlight progress.

3.3.1 National Media Rights (Freedom of Speech & Press)

Table 21 National Media Rights (Freedom of Speech & Press)

| YEAR | media_rights |
|------|--------------|
| 2000 | N/A |
| 2001 | N/A |
| 2002 | N/A |
| 2003 | N/A |
| 2004 | N/A |
| 2005 | N/A |
| 2006 | N/A |
| 2007 | N/A |
| 2008 | N/A |
| 2009 | N/A |
| 2010 | N/A |
| 2011 | N/A |
| 2012 | N/A |
| 2013 | N/A |
| 2014 | N/A |
| 2015 | N/A |
| 2016 | N/A |
| 2017 | 1 |
| 2018 | 1 |
| 2019 | 1 |
| 2020 | 1 |
| 2021 | 1 |
| 2022 | N/A |

To score national media rights, we used Human Rights Watch World Reports and Amnesty International Annual Reports. Information was only available from 2017-2021. Nationally, every year received a score of 1.

Concerns over media rights mostly arose due to former President Trump's public attacks on journalists and media outlets that questioned his administration's policies which eroded trust. Violence against journalists also increased with Trump's attacks on the media.² Furthermore, journalists reporting on public events were often targets for arrest and brutality by law enforcement. In 2017, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights voiced unease over the President's actions, suggesting that "freedom of the press" was "under attack."² In 2018, Trump's attacks on the media escalated where he labeled most of the media "enemy of the people."² Media rights was by far the most under-recorded and challenging right to score.

Throughout the years reported, it was not uncommon for laws to be weaponized against the media. The 2019 Human Rights Watch World Report stated, "US technology companies faced increased pressure from lawmakers to restrict speech on their platforms."² In the 2021 report, it was mentioned that, following Twitter's placement of a fact-check label on Trump's tweets, he issued an executive order seeking to strip legal protections from social media platforms.²

Additionally, violence and threats against journalists were common. Amnesty's 2022 annual report described the tactics against media members stating that they, "were specifically targeted with chemical irritants and kinetic impact projectiles, arrested and detained, seemingly on account of their work documenting and remedying law enforcement agencies' human rights abuses."¹

3.3.2 Subnational Media Rights (Freedom of Speech & Press)

To score subnational media rights, we used the U.S. Press Freedom Tracker. Information was only available from 2017-2022. Like children's rights, the U.S. Press Freedom Tracker provided actual numbers that I could turn into graphs (Figures 11 – 20). Likewise, I also condensed these numbers on a scale of 0-2 for the sake of consistency. When condensing these numbers, I took the median number of violations and used that to adapt the scoring guidelines where:

- If fifty-six or more violations occurred, then that year received a 0.
- If one to fifty-five incidents occurred, then that year received a 1.
- If a state had zero incidents, then that year received a received a 2.

It is important to note that this way of coding does not follow the CIRIGHTS methodology because the CIRIGHTS coding scheme uses qualitative data and U.S. Press Freedom Tracker provided quantitative data.

Figure 11 shows the subnational non-condensed recorded reports, starting in 2017, that showcase the repression and violence towards journalists, thereby limiting media rights and inhibiting free speech. Figure 11 also shows a sharp increase in press freedom incidents in 2020, with the highest being Oregon surpassing 200 incidents.

No state received all 2's, however Arkansas, Oklahoma and Wisconsin did receive a few 2's. The other states had all 1's with one 0 in 2020. States that received a 0 in 2020 were California, New York, and Oregon.

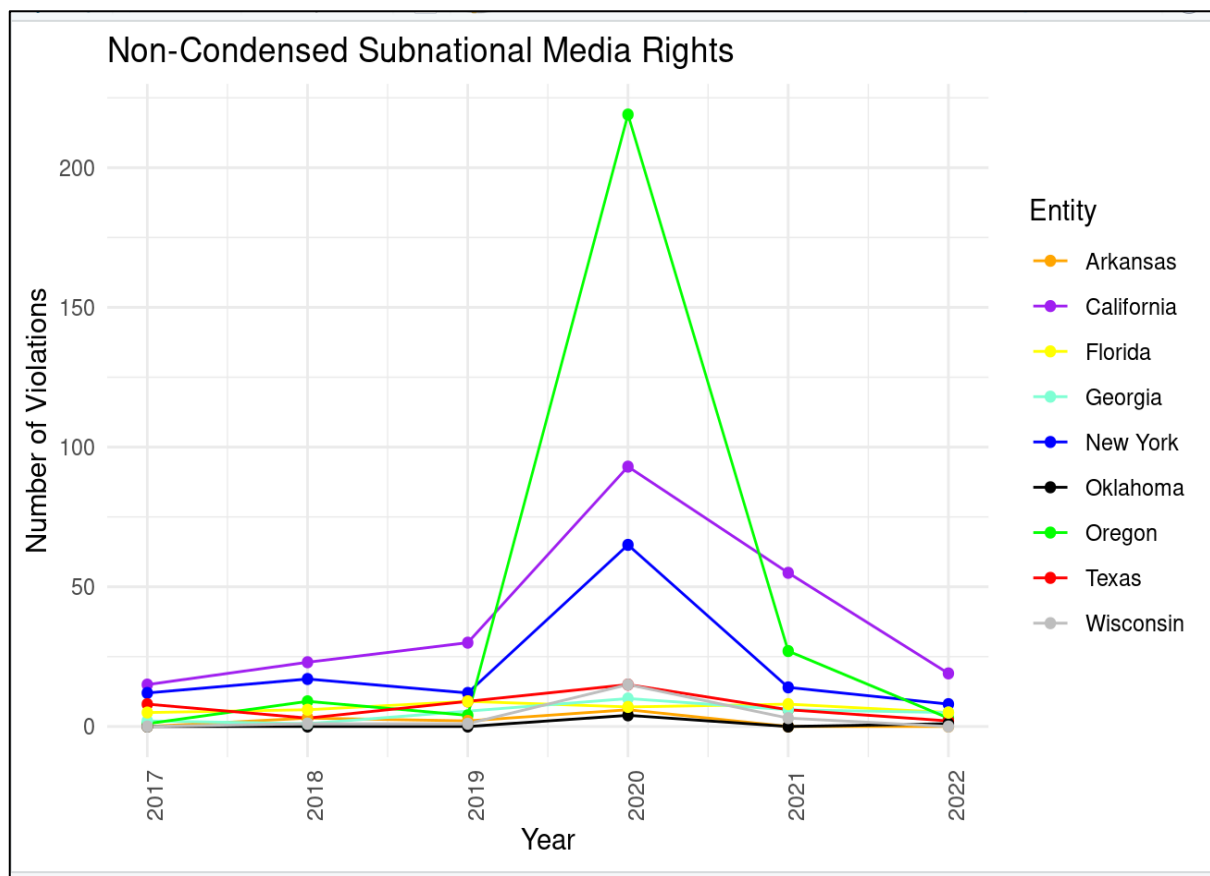


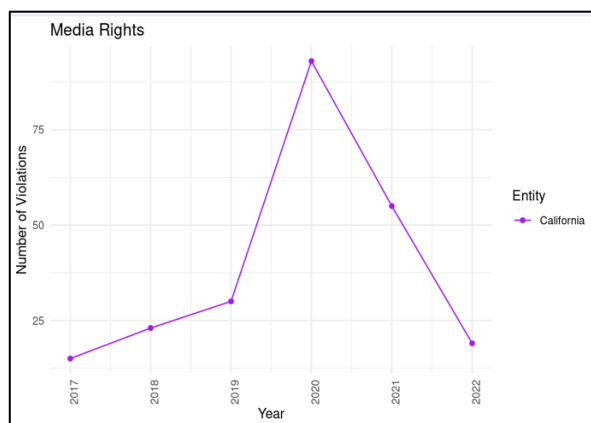
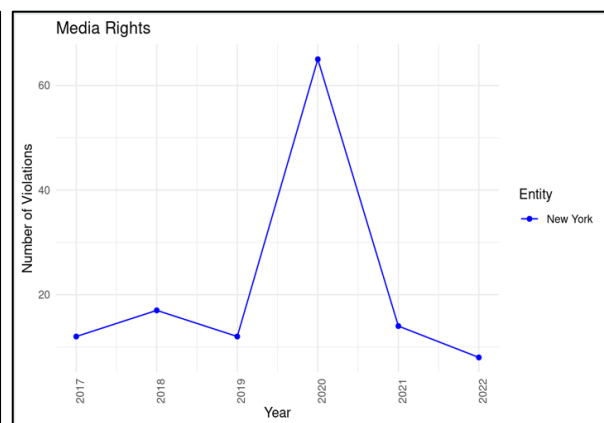
Figure 5 Subnational Media Rights (Freedom of Speech & Press) (Non-Condensed)

California

| YEAR | media_rights |
|------|--------------|
| 2000 | N/A |
| 2001 | N/A |
| 2002 | N/A |
| 2003 | N/A |
| 2004 | N/A |
| 2005 | N/A |
| 2006 | N/A |
| 2007 | N/A |
| 2008 | N/A |
| 2009 | N/A |
| 2010 | N/A |
| 2011 | N/A |
| 2012 | N/A |
| 2013 | N/A |
| 2014 | N/A |
| 2015 | N/A |
| 2016 | N/A |
| 2017 | 1 |
| 2018 | 1 |
| 2019 | 1 |
| 2020 | 0 |
| 2021 | 1 |
| 2022 | 1 |

Table 22 California Media Rights**New York**

| YEAR | media_rights |
|------|--------------|
| 2000 | N/A |
| 2001 | N/A |
| 2002 | N/A |
| 2003 | N/A |
| 2004 | N/A |
| 2005 | N/A |
| 2006 | N/A |
| 2007 | N/A |
| 2008 | N/A |
| 2009 | N/A |
| 2010 | N/A |
| 2011 | N/A |
| 2012 | N/A |
| 2013 | N/A |
| 2014 | N/A |
| 2015 | N/A |
| 2016 | N/A |
| 2017 | 1 |
| 2018 | 1 |
| 2019 | 1 |
| 2020 | 0 |
| 2021 | 1 |
| 2022 | 1 |

Table 23 New York Media Rights**Figure 12 California Media Rights (Non-Condensed)****Figure 13 New York Media Rights (Non-Condensed)**

Oregon

| YEAR | media_rights |
|------|--------------|
| 2000 | N/A |
| 2001 | N/A |
| 2002 | N/A |
| 2003 | N/A |
| 2004 | N/A |
| 2005 | N/A |
| 2006 | N/A |
| 2007 | N/A |
| 2008 | N/A |
| 2009 | N/A |
| 2010 | N/A |
| 2011 | N/A |
| 2012 | N/A |
| 2013 | N/A |
| 2014 | N/A |
| 2015 | N/A |
| 2016 | N/A |
| 2017 | 1 |
| 2018 | 1 |
| 2019 | 1 |
| 2020 | 0 |
| 2021 | 1 |
| 2022 | 1 |

Table 24 Oregon Media Rights

Texas

| YEAR | media_rights |
|------|--------------|
| 2000 | N/A |
| 2001 | N/A |
| 2002 | N/A |
| 2003 | N/A |
| 2004 | N/A |
| 2005 | N/A |
| 2006 | N/A |
| 2007 | N/A |
| 2008 | N/A |
| 2009 | N/A |
| 2010 | N/A |
| 2011 | N/A |
| 2012 | N/A |
| 2013 | N/A |
| 2014 | N/A |
| 2015 | N/A |
| 2016 | N/A |
| 2017 | 1 |
| 2018 | 1 |
| 2019 | 1 |
| 2020 | 1 |
| 2021 | 1 |
| 2022 | 1 |

Table 25 Texas Media Rights

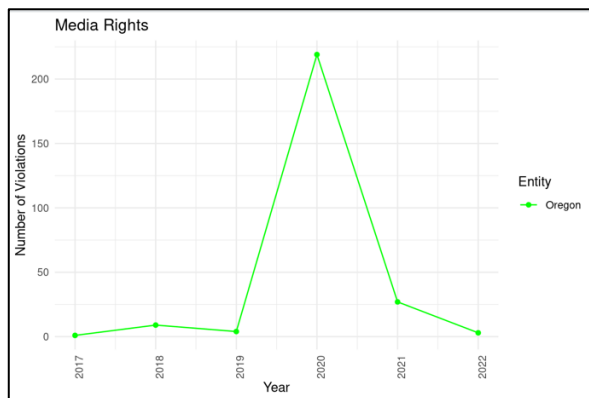


Figure 14 Oregon Media Rights (Non-Condensed)

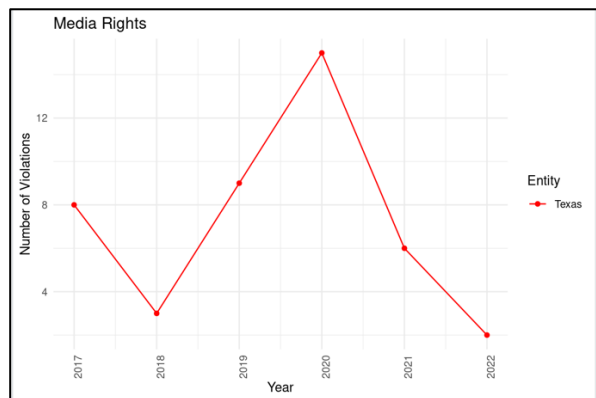


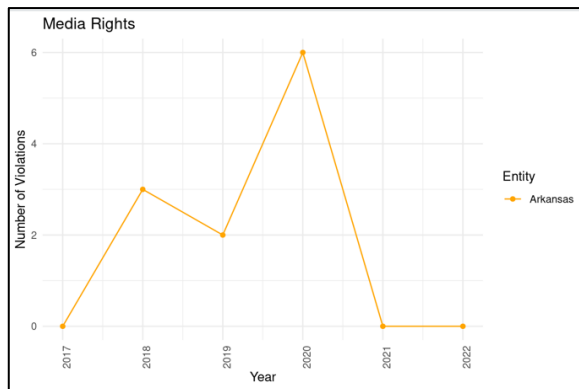
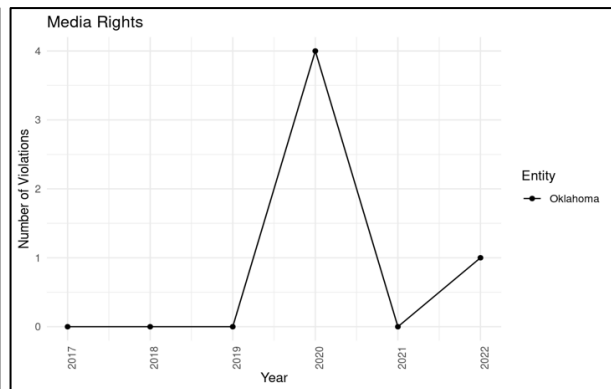
Figure 15 Texas Media Rights (Non-Condensed)

Arkansas

| YEAR | media_rights |
|------|--------------|
| 2000 | N/A |
| 2001 | N/A |
| 2002 | N/A |
| 2003 | N/A |
| 2004 | N/A |
| 2005 | N/A |
| 2006 | N/A |
| 2007 | N/A |
| 2008 | N/A |
| 2009 | N/A |
| 2010 | N/A |
| 2011 | N/A |
| 2012 | N/A |
| 2013 | N/A |
| 2014 | N/A |
| 2015 | N/A |
| 2016 | N/A |
| 2017 | 2 |
| 2018 | 1 |
| 2019 | 1 |
| 2020 | 1 |
| 2021 | 2 |
| 2022 | 2 |

Table 26 Arkansas Media Rights**Oklahoma**

| YEAR | media_rights |
|------|--------------|
| 2000 | N/A |
| 2001 | N/A |
| 2002 | N/A |
| 2003 | N/A |
| 2004 | N/A |
| 2005 | N/A |
| 2006 | N/A |
| 2007 | N/A |
| 2008 | N/A |
| 2009 | N/A |
| 2010 | N/A |
| 2011 | N/A |
| 2012 | N/A |
| 2013 | N/A |
| 2014 | N/A |
| 2015 | N/A |
| 2016 | N/A |
| 2017 | 2 |
| 2018 | 2 |
| 2019 | 2 |
| 2020 | 1 |
| 2021 | 2 |
| 2022 | 1 |

Table 27 Oklahoma Media Rights**Figure 16 Arkansas Media Rights (Non-Condensed)****Figure 17 Oklahoma Media Rights (Non-Condensed)**

Georgia

| YEAR | media_rights |
|------|--------------|
| 2000 | N/A |
| 2001 | N/A |
| 2002 | N/A |
| 2003 | N/A |
| 2004 | N/A |
| 2005 | N/A |
| 2006 | N/A |
| 2007 | N/A |
| 2008 | N/A |
| 2009 | N/A |
| 2010 | N/A |
| 2011 | N/A |
| 2012 | N/A |
| 2013 | N/A |
| 2014 | N/A |
| 2015 | N/A |
| 2016 | N/A |
| 2017 | 1 |
| 2018 | 1 |
| 2019 | 1 |
| 2020 | 1 |
| 2021 | 1 |
| 2022 | 1 |

Table 28 Georgia Media Rights

Wisconsin

| YEAR | media_rights |
|------|--------------|
| 2000 | N/A |
| 2001 | N/A |
| 2002 | N/A |
| 2003 | N/A |
| 2004 | N/A |
| 2005 | N/A |
| 2006 | N/A |
| 2007 | N/A |
| 2008 | N/A |
| 2009 | N/A |
| 2010 | N/A |
| 2011 | N/A |
| 2012 | N/A |
| 2013 | N/A |
| 2014 | N/A |
| 2015 | N/A |
| 2016 | N/A |
| 2017 | 2 |
| 2018 | 1 |
| 2019 | 1 |
| 2020 | 1 |
| 2021 | 1 |
| 2022 | 2 |

Table 29 Wisconsin Media Rights

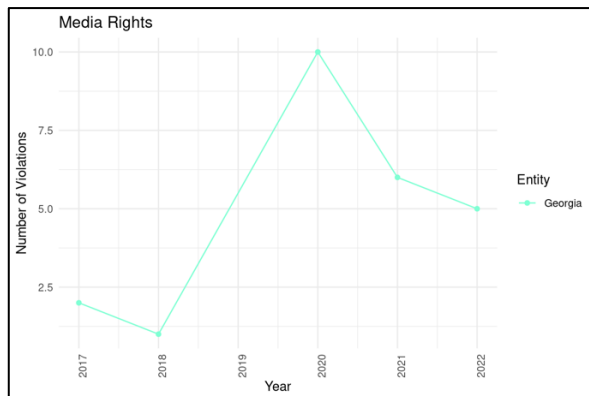


Figure 18 Georgia Media Rights (Non-Condensed)

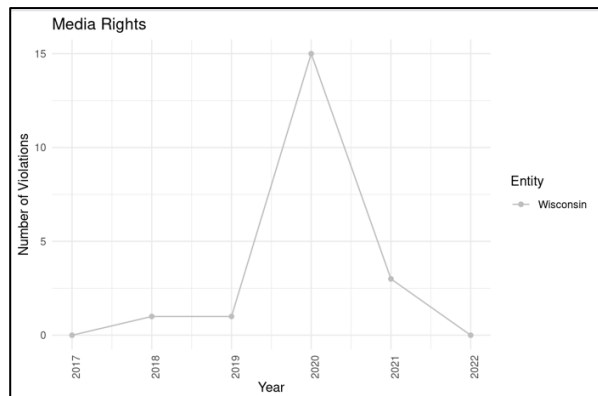
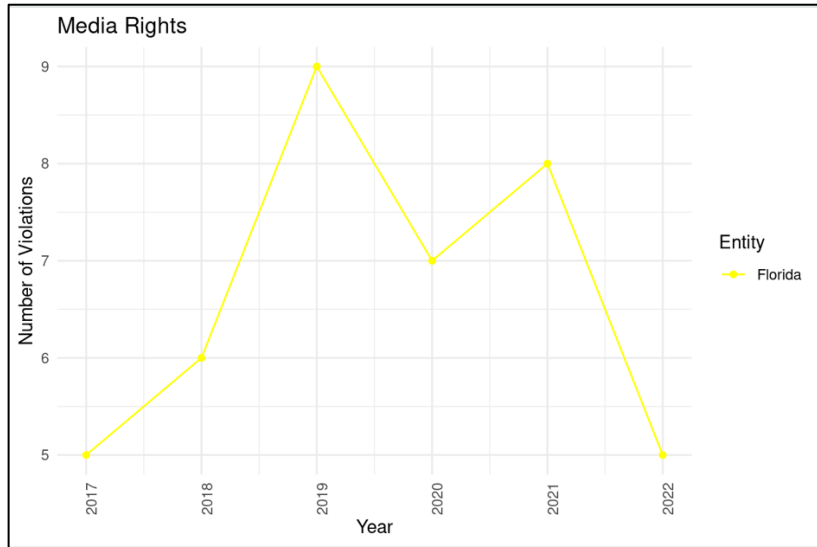


Figure 19 Wisconsin Media Rights (Non-Condensed)

Florida:

| YEAR | media_rights |
|-------------|---------------------|
| 2000 | N/A |
| 2001 | N/A |
| 2002 | N/A |
| 2003 | N/A |
| 2004 | N/A |
| 2005 | N/A |
| 2006 | N/A |
| 2007 | N/A |
| 2008 | N/A |
| 2009 | N/A |
| 2010 | N/A |
| 2011 | N/A |
| 2012 | N/A |
| 2013 | N/A |
| 2014 | N/A |
| 2015 | N/A |
| 2016 | N/A |
| 2017 | 1 |
| 2018 | 1 |
| 2019 | 1 |
| 2020 | 1 |
| 2021 | 1 |
| 2022 | 1 |

Table 30 Florida Media Rights**Figure 20 Florida Media Rights (Non-Condensed)**

4 Discussion

4.1 Prisoner's Rights

In analyzing prisoner's rights, the data revealed a consistent pattern of violations across national levels. Subnational results were limited. At the national level, every year scored a 1, indicating that prisoner's rights were consistently disregarded. Similarly, at the subnational level, commonalities with the national data persisted across states, with California and New York emerging as frequent focal points. However, a possible explanation for this could be the state's population size with a larger state potentially having more reports of violations simply because of the high number of individuals. Therefore, it is important to note that just because a state has less reports, does not mean it is respecting human rights. This can be seen using California and New York as examples. In the reports, they are mentioned the most for violations, but also have the most instances of progressive legislation, therefore receiving more 2's in subnational prisoner's rights than any other states. However, Texas, as a large state, was only mentioned twice over 22 years, with one year scoring a 2.

The national and subnational data coupled with the absence of information for subnational prisoner's rights suggest shortcomings within incarceration institutions and could indicate deeper systematic issues. This could mean a lack of prison oversight, transparency, and accountability within state-level correctional systems. Moreover, it highlights an under-prioritization of prisoner's rights issues within the political or public agenda, which could in turn reflect broader negative cultural attitudes towards incarcerated individuals. Prisoner's rights may be under-reported because of the benefits derived from the use of low-wage labor within prisons. Additionally, due to the high incarceration rate, a lack of attention to prisoner's rights may be because of the high costs associated with legal liabilities and violations. Finally, the consistency of these low scores may also suggest that new reform and advocacy initiatives are needed to address these underlying issues.

4.2 Children's Rights (Child Labor)

For children's rights (child labor) law & practice, the findings highlight a profound absence of attention towards these issues in both federal and state-level regulations and practices. These results can be attributed to a cycle where the lack of protections for child agricultural workers enables and perpetuates violations. The exemptions for agricultural work and minimal protections for child farmworkers contribute to a culture of exploitation. Similar to prisoner's rights, higher numbers of violations in states with large populations may simply reflect population size rather than the prevalence of child labor.

The data, which shows that child labor in the agricultural sector is severely under protected, could be due to a multitude of factors. Agriculture has a long history of employing child labor and cultural norms may perpetuate it. Along with this, many families rely on their children's labor for economic survival which leads to a lack of enforcement and protections for children. Family farms or businesses may experience limited regulatory oversight contributing to this issue. Additionally, child labor victims may be particularly vulnerable to exploitation due to power imbalances. This issue is exacerbated by the fact that many child workers in the agricultural field come from marginalized communities. Furthermore, the complex supply chains of the agricultural sector may make it challenging to monitor and enforce labor standards. Children working for their family or subcontractors make it difficult to hold employers accountable. Finally, it is possible that we see a lack of protections for

child agricultural workers due to the financial necessity of child labor within some families. Therefore, the government isn't being pressured to enforce regulations.

4.3 Media Rights (Freedom of Speech & Press)

In terms of media rights (freedom of speech & press), the data and lack thereof, disclosed a trend of attacks and harassment targeting journalists and media outlets at a national and subnational level. Incidents of violations were observed from 2017-2020, with the highest number of subnational incidents occurring in 2020. Oregon notably held the highest number of press freedom incidents, surpassing 200 incidents in 2020. Nationally, violations occurred mostly over concerns of former President Trump's openly hostile comments towards media outlets that criticized him, seemingly aimed to erode trust in the media and suppress those who did not agree with him. Violence and threats towards journalists paired with efforts to suppress media occurred at a national and subnational level.

The data, showing a spike in violations in 2020, could imply that the erosion of media rights in the United States is largely fueled by political rhetoric that undermine the integrity of the press. This spike may be linked to specific events such as the presidential election, the pandemic, and increased participation in social movement protests. Furthermore, the states that received a 0 in 2020, California, New York, and Oregon, may have received a 0 because of their political leanings. It is possible that blue states tend to have more violations IF a higher number of grassroots and human rights organizations exist that report them. Higher scores could mean that violations are under-reported. Furthermore, as observed in this report, violations were largely unreported until Trump's presidency and attacks on the media. As such, media rights have become politically charged in the United States.

4.4 Conclusion

This project introduces several limitations when studying human rights in the United States. Firstly, the most significant limitation of this research project is the scarcity of existing relevant information and reports on these rights. Despite efforts, certain aspects of prisoner's rights, media rights, and children's rights (child labor) law & practice may not have been adequately explored due to a lack of information on these rights, potentially affecting the outcome of the scores. I contend that the violations highlighted by organizations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International only offer a glimpse into the true extent of the human rights violations occurring in the United States. In other words, just because these violations are not being tracked or recorded, does not mean that they are not happening.

A second limitation of this research project is the small sample size used for subnational analysis. Consequently, the findings may not provide generalizable insights for human rights violations and their relation to population size and political demographic.

A third limitation for this project is the reliance on external reports that could introduce biases and overlook the complexities within each human rights issue. The scoring criteria may not fully capture the depth of exploitation and abuse endured by these populations. Furthermore, since the reports used to conduct the content analysis were international human rights reports, the reports generally lacked state specific information. Future research and advocacy efforts should strive to address these limitations.

Overall, the findings of this project underscore a need for comprehensive reforms in the areas of prisoner's rights, children's rights (child labor), and media rights (freedom of speech & press). No significant changes in respect for prisoner's rights, children's rights

(child labor), and media rights (freedom of speech & press) occurred from 2000- 2022.

Despite activism efforts and calls for reform, the United States has demonstrated it is behind in adopting the international standards they played a role in establishing and a hesitancy to actively address these issues in legislation. Evidence of this is seen in the lack of any substantial change over 22 years. Since we consistently found very little information it can be assumed that other states besides this sample also will also have an absence of information on these rights. The scope of this project underscores the absence of legal protections for vulnerable populations such as prisoners, children, and journalists. If there is a lack of protection and monitoring for any right, we can assume that violations occur. I suspect that these rights are under-reported because of the potential benefits in exploiting these groups. This project aims to highlight the lack of available data which signifies a critical gap in our understanding of these issues and underscores the need for more comprehensive research and data collection efforts. While the data is not perfect, it is a starting point upon which scholars and activists can build and expand. Limitations for this project exist, therefore I encourage critiques and suggestions as that will only aid in creating a United States that is more equitable and just for all.

5 References

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The logo for Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, featuring the text "ROBERT F. KENNEDY HUMAN RIGHTS" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The text is contained within a blue chevron shape pointing to the right.

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The logo for John Lewis Young Leaders, featuring the text "JOHN LEWIS YOUNG LEADERS" in blue, bold, sans-serif capital letters. To the right of the text are two blue footprints, one above the other, pointing towards the right.

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LEWIS
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