



Tracker: Efforts by States to Eliminate the Exception Allowing Slavery or Involuntary Servitude as Punishment for a Crime

The [Thirteenth Amendment](#) to The U.S. Constitution abolishes slavery and involuntary servitude except when it is punishment for a crime. Twenty states have similar language in their Constitutions. Colorado removed the exception in 2018, Utah and Nebraska voters approved a ballot measure to remove the language in 2020, and four other states are working to eliminate it. The chart below tracks the twenty-three states and the status of their efforts to abolish slavery and involuntary servitude. This chart will be periodically updated. It was last updated November 2020.

State	Original Text	Efforts to eliminate
States that have successfully eliminated the exception		
Colorado	There shall never be in this state either slavery or involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted. Article 2, Section 26	Successfully amended in 2018. Now reads: There shall never be in this state either slavery or involuntary servitude
Utah	Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within this State. Article I, Section 21	Voters approved a ballot measure to eliminate the exception on Nov. 3, 2020. When it goes into effect, January 2021, it will read: Neither Slavery nor involuntary servitude with exist within the State.
Nebraska	There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in this state, otherwise than for the punishment of crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted. Article I, Section 2	Voters approved a ballot measure on Nov. 3, 2020. When it goes it effect, it will read: There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in this State.

States working to eliminate the exception		
Arkansas	There shall be no slavery in this State, nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime. Article II, Section 27	In 2019 Rep. Vivian Flowers introduced an amendment to remove the exception. It did not make it out of the legislature.
Minnesota	No member of this state shall be disfranchised or deprived of any of the rights or privileges secured to any citizen thereof, unless by the law of the land or the judgement of his peers. There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the state, otherwise than as punishment for a crime of which the party has been convicted. Article I, Section 2	Senator Bobby Joe Champion introduced an amendment in February 2020. Awaiting further action by the legislature.
Tennessee	That slavery and involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, are forever prohibited in this state. Article 1, Section 33	Currently in the legislature . Passed in the 111 th session, now needs to pass in the 112 th session. If it does, it would be on the ballot in 2022
Wisconsin	There shall be neither slavery, nor involuntary servitude in this state, otherwise than for the punishment of crime, of which the party shall have been duly convicted. Article I, section 2	Rep. Lena Taylor advanced a bill to remove the exception for the punishment of a crime in 2016 and 2017 , it failed both times.
States not working to eliminate the exception		
Alabama	That no form of slavery shall exist in this state; and there shall not be any involuntary servitude, otherwise than for the punishment of crime, of which the party shall have been duly convicted. Article I, Section 32	
California	Slavery is prohibited. Involuntary servitude is	

	prohibited, except to punish crime. Article I, Section 6	
Georgia	There shall be no involuntary servitude within the State of Georgia except as a punishment for crime after legal conviction thereof or for contempt of court. Article I, Paragraph XXII	
Indiana	There shall be neither slavery, nor involuntary servitude, within the State, otherwise than for the punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted. Article I, Section 37	
Iowa	There shall be no slavery in this State; nor shall there be involuntary servitude, unless for the punishment of crime. Article I, Section 23	
Kansas	There shall be no slavery in this state; and no involuntary servitude, except for the punishment of crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted. Bill of Rights Section 6	
Kentucky	Slavery and involuntary servitude in this State are forbidden, except as a punishment for crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted. Article I, Section 25	
Louisiana	Slavery and involuntary servitude are prohibited, except in the latter case as punishment for crime. Article I, Section 3	
Michigan	Neither slavery, nor involuntary servitude unless for the punishment of crime, shall ever be tolerated in this state. Article I, Section 9	

Mississippi	There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in this state, otherwise than in the punishment of crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted. Article III, Section 15	
Nevada	That there shall be in this state neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, otherwise than in the punishment for crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted. Article I, Section 17	
North Carolina	Slavery is forever prohibited. Involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the parties have been adjudged guilty, is forever prohibited. Article I, Section 17	
North Dakota	Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, unless for the punishment of crime, shall ever be tolerated in this state. Article I, Section 6	
Ohio	There shall be no slavery in this state; nor involuntary servitude, unless for the punishment of crime. Article I, Section 6	
Oregon	There shall be neither slavery, nor involuntary servitude in the State, otherwise than as a punishment for crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted. Article I, Section 34	
Vermont	That all persons are born equally free and independent, and have certain natural, inherent, and unalienable rights, amongst which are the enjoying and defending life	

	and liberty, acquiring, possessing and protecting property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety; therefore no person born in this country, or brought from over sea, ought to beholden by law, to serve any person as a servant, slave or apprentice, after arriving to the age of twenty-one years, unless bound by the person's own consent, after arriving to such age, or bound by law for the payment of debts, damages, fines, costs, or the like. Chapter 1, Article 1	
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