Meanwhile, Harris County Commissioner Rodney Ellis instructed the county auditor to investigate funds the county had given to Crime Stoppers of Houston, and how they were used. Praising our exposé, Ellis said, “I know it’s popular for people to talk about the big lie and try to discredit the media, but in my judgment, we shouldn’t shy away from fact-based journalism.”

With rising crime a hot issue in the 2022 midterm elections, the nation’s crime data turns out to be less reliable than ever. Nearly 40% of local police departments failed to report their annual crime statistics to the FBI, according to a data investigation from The Marshall Project. We worked extensively with dozens of local reporters from the news outlet Axios, showing them how to mine our database for insights — resulting in no fewer than twenty local stories on this topic from Axios, reaching nearly a million additional readers. NBC 4, one of several news stations in Ohio that covered this issue extensively, even got a local sheriff to admit that The Marshall Project “is going to cause us internally to take a look at our process, and we’ll be addressing that in the very near future.”

The Marshall Project tracks the impact of our journalism on policymakers, advocates and other media. Here are some recent examples:

**New But Deadly** The Marshall Project’s Christie Thompson started covering prison violence after getting a tip from an advocate in 2016. Prisons across the country were putting two people in cells smaller than a parking space, 23 hours a day, seven days a week. In our latest investigation with NPR, we revealed that the newest federal prison, in Thomson, Illinois, has quickly become one of the deadliest: Since 2019, the facility has seen at least five suspected homicides.

After our story was published, lawmakers reacted immediately. U.S. Sens. Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth, and Rep. Cheri Bustos — all representing Illinois — demanded the Inspector General of the Justice Department investigate claims that staff purposefully housed prisoners with people they knew would be violent, and subjected them to painful restraints for hours or sometimes days. The Justice Department probe is underway. In Senate floor testimony, Durbin cited our investigation while slamming the Bureau of Prisons for mismanagement and calling for a new “reform-minded” leader for the BOP.

Following our investigation, national human rights organizations, including the ACLU and the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, urged President Biden to shut down Thomson and ban solitary confinement in federal prisons. Meanwhile, the Corrections Information Council, a watchdog organization that is supposed to monitor and report on federal prisons, was subjected to a blistering critique from the Washington City Paper, citing our investigation.

**A Controversial Turn** Crime Stoppers of Houston has traditionally been a nonpartisan nonprofit, gleaning crime information from the public via its tip line: 713-222-TIPS. But recently, Crime Stoppers has started blasting out a different, more political message, according to our investigation with The New York Times. We revealed the organization took millions in state grants backed by Republican Gov. Greg Abbott, and began publicly blaming judges appointed by Democrats for a rise in crime.

Local media amplified our story. The Texas Standard interviewed Marshall Project staff writer Keri Blakinger, and the Houston Chronicle probed deeper into the issue with its editorial, “Can we still trust Crime Stoppers?”
Essential but Excluded. Spurred by media outlet, to share the story The New Bedford Light, a nonprofit In December 2021, we partnered with payments for essential workers. thousands of dollars of COVID-19 relief coast of Massachusetts, were left out of in New Bedford, a city on the south pandemic, many Mayan immigrants working through the pandemic. in compensation from the state for people from 2015 to 2020, and the lack spoke with a woman who received $500 feature in Spanish, NOTICIAS-NB, and is continuing to follow the story. They spoke with a woman who received $500 in compensation from the state for working through the pandemic.

Signed into Law Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards signed the state’s first law restricting the use of solitary confinement in juvenile facilities, after our investigation with ProPublica and NBC News made national headlines. Our reporting revealed that the Acadiana Center for Youth at St. Martinville, which opened last summer, held teens as young as 14 in solitary confinement virtually around-the-clock for weeks; they were forced to sleep on the floor and shackled when leaving their cells to shower. Many critics called it child abuse, saying it was a clear violation of a minor’s civil rights. The new law went into effect on Aug. 1.

Kentucky Shootings Our investigation last year into fatal shoot- ings by police in rural areas revealed that Kentucky State Police had the worst record of any agency in the country. State troopers fatally shot 41 people from 2015 to 2020, and the lack of video evidence meant many of these incidents escaped scrutiny. Shortly after we published on the front page of The New York Times and the Lexington Herald-Leader, in partnership with the Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting, Gov. Andy Beshear requested $12.2 million to equip the State Police with body cameras. This spring, lawmakers approved the expense.

Deadly Fires Jacinto De La Garza spent his last breaths gasping for air while the smoke thickened in his cell, and his neighbors shouted for help that never came. The Marshall Project’s Keri Blakinger initially began reporting on Texas prison fires in 2020. Our latest investigation, co-published with the Houston Chronicle, was heavily cited by De La Garza’s family in their lawsuit against the Texas Department of Criminal Justice for failing to have working fire alarms in prisons.

“I can remember vividly the impact I felt after reading a particular article in News Inside,” says Joel Caston, who was elected to public office while incarcerated in the Washington, D.C. jail. That Marshall Project article focused on “gate money,” or the often pitiful sums that are handed to people when they leave prison. Some states give as much as $200, while others give $10 or $20 — and some give nothing at all. Caston made increasing “gate money” a focus of his campaign for a local advisory board — and won. Subsequently released from the jail, he now represents an area of Washington, D.C. that includes the jail, a women’s shelter, and a new luxury apartment complex.

While incarcerated in New York state, Sean Kyler read a Marshall Project profile of Michelle Jones, who earned a master’s degree in history while in prison in Indiana, and joined a PhD program after she was released. He was particularly impressed by the way Jones used her networks to help land a spot in graduate school. “One of the greatest lessons I’ve learned is that networking and the skills I built while incarcerated are transferable beyond the wall,” said Kyler, who now works as an advocate at a criminal justice nonprofit. “Reading ‘News Inside’ when I was still in reminded me of that.”

Alex Valentine received a copy of News Inside at his college program in prison in California. It inspired him to start a peer-supported literacy program after transferring to a lower-security facility. He now uses issues of News Inside to teach other incarcerated people to read.