



LOUISIANANS FOR PRISON ALTERNATIVES

Reinvesting in Louisiana's Public Safety

The Louisiana Department of Corrections and Public Safety is the third-largest expense in the state's budget. In 2017, lawmakers appropriated \$625 million for adult corrections. By sending fewer low-level offenders to prison and reducing unreasonably long prison terms, Louisiana can save hundreds of millions of dollars. Those savings should be reinvested in approaches proven to change criminal behavior.

THE PROBLEM

Programs proven to be successful at changing criminal behavior – such as drug and alcohol treatment, better community supervision for high-risk individuals, and support for people re-entering the community and workforce after prison – have been under-funded in Louisiana for years. The chronic underfunding is primarily driven by the fact that costly prison beds consume a large portion of the public safety budget.

Reinvestment success stories

- Since 2010, 24 states have completed similar criminal justice reform efforts, where prison populations have been reduced and several of the states have used the savings to fund proven approaches to reducing crime.*
- Of those 24, 16 have invested money upfront, four states have waited for savings to materialize before reinvesting, and four states have not reinvested savings.
- In the last seven years, the 20 states that have reinvested savings have put a total of \$450 million into proven approaches that improve public safety.
- Even South Carolina – a state that took steps to send fewer low-level offenders to prison, but didn't invest the savings into programs to change criminal behavior – has seen results. Since enacting reforms in 2010, the state has reduced imprisonment by 16 percent, closed six prisons and seen a 16 percent reduction in its crime rate.

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SOLUTIONS

The Louisiana Legislature can improve public safety by supporting the following reform:

HB 489 (Leger) – Under this bill, data would be collected to monitor the outcome of public safety reforms. A substantial portion of the savings from reducing Louisiana’s prison population would be reinvested into programming designed to prevent recidivism.

Louisiana should implement public safety programs proven to be effective in other jurisdictions. It should also support and replicate successful evidence-based re-entry programs such as the Louisiana Prisoner Reentry Initiative.

* THE 24 STATES THAT HAVE COMPLETED SIMILAR CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM EFFORTS ARE ALABAMA, ALASKA, ARKANSAS, DELAWARE, GEORGIA, HAWAII, IDAHO, KANSAS, KENTUCKY, LOUISIANA, MARYLAND, MISSISSIPPI, MISSOURI, NEBRASKA, NEW HAMPSHIRE, NORTH CAROLINA, OHIO, OKLAHOMA, OREGON, PENNSYLVANIA, SOUTH CAROLINA, SOUTH DAKOTA, UTAH AND WEST VIRGINIA.

Louisianans for Prison Alternatives (LPA) is a diverse statewide coalition of organizations committed to reducing Louisiana's imprisonment rate. LPA sees an urgent need for the Louisiana State Legislature to pass comprehensive criminal justice reform legislation to make our system more just, accountable and transparent to all Louisianans.