

A PATH FORWARD FOR ALABAMA'S PRISON SYSTEM

The prison system is in crisis. We need solutions that

- **Improve safety**
- **Reduce overcrowding**
- **Protect taxpayers**

Alabama's prison system is at the breaking point. Prisons are at 160% of capacity ... facilities are ill-equipped, inadequate, and severely understaffed ... violence is rampant ... and health care falls far short of constitutional guarantees.

Alabama deserves better. Our political leaders must take responsibility and repair this broken system.

1. Strategic new construction, not a billion-dollar boondoggle.

Prison officials have proposed the construction of three new mega-prisons with a price tag approaching \$1 billion. Instead, the state should close at least two of the most deplorable facilities, including Holman Correctional Facility, and replace them with facilities that house no more than 1,000. In addition, a new medical and mental health correctional campus should be built to house prisoners with the most serious conditions. This facility should be designed in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Under no circumstances should state officials fall for privatization schemes, which are proven to fail.

2. No more excuses on increasing correctional staff and reducing violence.

Chronic understaffing of Alabama's prisons has had deadly consequences. At least 26 people, including prison staff, have died violently over the past two years. A federal court has ordered the state to hire 2,200 additional correctional officers by 2022. Yet, Commissioner Dunn has requested funding for only an additional 500 this year. That's not enough to ensure safety for both prisoners and officers. To address the staffing shortage, the state must hire 1,100 new officers this year and another 1,100 next year. To retain experienced officers, and thereby increase safety, the state also must increase salaries beyond the 20% requested this year.

3. Sentencing reform – now.

Modest, bipartisan sentencing and parole reforms enacted in 2015 are projected to save \$350 million and reduce the prison population by more than 4,000 by 2021, without jeopardizing public safety. But it's not nearly enough. Alabama remains far behind many other states in reforming its marijuana laws and other laws that swell the prison population without making us any safer. Additional reforms can save another \$500 million from the prison budget and help the state avoid a costly construction spree. Alabama can also implement evidence-based programs that return rehabilitated prisoners to their communities when they pose little threat to public safety.

*Alabama's prison crisis is not going away without decisive action. We're calling on **Governor Ivey, Commissioner Dunn, and the Alabama Legislature** to work with us to forge Alabama solutions for Alabama's problems.*

We must ACT NOW to secure safe, sensible prison policies for our state's future!

Learn more at www.splcenter.org/pathforward

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