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Oklahoma Policy Institute

2018 POLICY PRIORITY: PASS SMART ON CRIME REFORMS

Background

Oklahoma has the second-highest incarceration rate in the country and the highest incarceration rate for women. Our prisons are badly overcrowded and underfunded, posing a serious safety risk to inmates and corrections officers. The lack of funding for rehabilitative services throughout the system means that even those who want to turn their lives around are given little chance to do so.

Last year, Governor Fallin's Justice Reform Task Force put forth a series of proposals that would reduce Oklahoma's prison population growth substantially over the next ten years. The proposals draw on lessons learned in states that have seen reductions in both incarceration and crime in recent years, focusing on evidence-based practices that expand treatment and accountability in community supervision. Unfortunately, the most significant proposals stalled in the last weeks of the 2017 regular session.



The Solution

Lawmakers must not waste another opportunity to pass the critical criminal justice reforms offered by the Justice Reform Task Force. The package includes an overhaul of the parole system; the introduction of evidence-based practices in community supervision; and reduced sentences for many crimes to better align with other states. The experience of other states shows that these reforms will both promote public safety and save the state money in the long term.

What You Can Do

Contact your state Representative and Senator and urge them to vote for justice reforms that promote rehabilitation and reduce incarceration.

You can look up your Senator and Representative at <http://okpolicy.org/find-your-legislator/>, call the House switchboard at 405-521-2711, and call the Senate switchboard at 405-524-0126.

To join the coalition of Oklahomans working to ensure that our criminal justice system is smarter, makes our communities safer, and gives us the return on our taxpayer dollars that we deserve, visit www.okjusticereform.org. To receive SMS advocacy alerts on important criminal justice issues, text OKJUSTICE to 51555.