

# Make the sentencing reforms of SQ 780 retroactive

## BACKGROUND

In 2016, voters approved two major justice reform initiatives, State Questions 780 and 781. SQ 780 reclassified simple drug possession and several low-level property crimes as misdemeanors instead of felonies, and SQ 781 directed the long-term savings from lower incarceration rates towards county treatment and rehabilitation services.



While these reforms have had an instant impact on our court system, thousands of Oklahomans remain in prison for offenses that today would be a misdemeanor. Between 2005 and 2015, 17,458 people were admitted to prison in Oklahoma for possession of a controlled substance. Many more – though we don't know exactly how many – were imprisoned for low-level property crimes changed by SQ 780.

The lifelong consequences of a felony sentence also make finding a job and rebuilding a productive life outside of prison far more difficult.

## THE SOLUTION

Lawmakers should make SQ 780 retroactive by creating a process through which those in prison or under supervision for SQ 780 crimes can apply to be resentenced under current law.

SQ 780 retroactivity would mean that thousands of incarcerated people in this state could apply for shorter sentences. The savings from reducing incarceration should be invested in mental health and substance abuse treatment, which has proven successful in lowering crime rates over time.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Contact your state Representative and Senator and urge them to make SQ 780 retroactive. Urge them to give those incarcerated before recent reforms a chance to apply for the shorter sentences available under current law.

You can look up your Senator and Representative on our website under the “**Advocacy**” tab on our main menu. You can also call the House switchboard at 405-521-2711, and 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](http://www.okjusticereform.org). To receive SMS advocacy alerts on important budget issues, text OKJUSTICE to 51555.



“While these reforms have had an instant impact on our court system, thousands of Oklahomans remain in prison for offenses that today would be a misdemeanor.”



For links to additional information and to view our full list of 2019 Policy Priorities, visit us online at

[www.okpolicy.org/2019solutions](http://www.okpolicy.org/2019solutions)