

## Safe Communities

### BACKGROUND

Oklahoma has one of the nation's highest incarceration rates. This incarceration crisis breaks up families, worsens racial disparities, and extracts millions of dollars annually in court fines and fees from the state's poorest communities. None of these policies make Oklahomans safer; numerous states have lower crime rates and significantly lower incarceration rates.

Oklahoma's expensive incarceration crisis creates devastating consequences for communities statewide. Courts and court services remain habitually underfunded. Jails and prisons are far easier to access in many parts of Oklahoma than mental health or substance use disorder treatment. This intergenerational cycle is particularly destructive to low-income rural families and families in more urban communities of color. One in 6 Oklahoma children have at least one incarcerated parent. Oklahoma leads the nation in childhood trauma, with disturbingly high rates of domestic violence and among the nation's highest number of missing and murdered indigenous women.

Evidence-based justice reform has the potential to break this terrible cycle of economic and social harm caused by incarceration. Such would address the root causes of crime by providing health care access and resources for those experiencing homelessness and trauma. Implementing these reforms would allow law enforcement to focus their efforts on reducing crime and ensuring public safety for every community in Oklahoma.



### SOLUTIONS

- Fund criminal courts and court services through appropriated revenue so that Oklahoma's courts are not reliant on fines and fees from low-income families.
- End the destructive practice of driver's license suspensions for failure to pay court fines and fees for non-driving infractions.
- Increase investment in treatment and resources so more Oklahomans can get the help they need rather than be funneled into Oklahoma's prisons and jails.
- Reform the cash bail system, including consideration of a defendant's parenting and caregiver status before assigning bail or detaining them pre-trial.



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# 2021 POLICY PRIORITIES



## HEALTHY OKLAHOMANS

- Fully fund Medicaid expansion without taking from other public services or harming low-income Oklahomans.
- Halt the implementation of privatized managed care, which would allow the continuation of Oklahoma's historically efficient and effective Medicaid administration.



## THRIVING FAMILIES

- Create a state minimum wage that grows to at least \$15 per hour and keeps up with inflation; allow cities and counties to set their own minimum wages.
- Adopt a statewide insurance program to make paid family and medical leave available to all workers and the self-employed.
- Gradually increase the state Earned Income Tax Credit while make it fully refundable starting with tax year 2020.
- Shape the state's budget and tax systems so that Oklahoma can make meaningful, sustained investments in public services that provide equal opportunities for all residents to thrive.



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