



LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS

To Reduce Crime & Incarceration

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130 Top Police Chiefs and Prosecutors Urge End to Mass Incarceration

New group, Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime and Incarceration, will meet with President Obama to urge him to take action to reform our criminal justice system

Washington, D.C. — Today 130 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, and attorneys general from all 50 states join together as a surprising new voice calling for the end to unnecessary incarceration in the U.S. — while maintaining public safety.

The new group, [Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime and Incarceration](#), marks an unprecedented partnership among the nation's top law enforcement leaders to push reforms to reduce incarceration and strengthen public safety.

At a press conference today in Washington, D.C., police chiefs from six of the largest U.S. cities, including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Houston, and New Orleans, will announce their policy agenda, featured in a [Statement of Principles](#).

President Barack Obama will host members of the group at the White House tomorrow, where group leaders will speak on why they believe reducing imprisonment while protecting public safety is a vital national goal.

Among the group's members and speakers (see a full list of members [here](#)):

- **Charlie Beck**, Chief, Los Angeles Police Department
- **William Bratton**, Commissioner, New York City Police Department
- **Benjamin David**, District Attorney, New Hanover County & Pender County, North Carolina
- **Cathy Lanier**, Chief, Washington D.C. Metropolitan Police Department
- **Garry McCarthy**, Superintendent, Chicago Police Department; co-chair, Law Enforcement Leaders
- **Charles McClelland**, Chief, Houston Police Department
- **Ronal Serpas**, former Superintendent, New Orleans Police Department; co-chair, Law Enforcement Leaders
- **Hassan Aden**, Police Director of Research and Programs, International Association of Chiefs of Police
- **Cedric Alexander**, former President, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives
- **Kay Chopard Cohen**, Executive Director, National District Attorneys Association
- **Alfred Durham**, Chief, Richmond Police Department
- **Mark Earley**, former Attorney General, Virginia; former President and CEO, Prison Fellowship
- **Sim Gill**, District Attorney, Salt Lake County, Utah

- **Heidi Heitkamp**, U.S. Senator and former Attorney General, North Dakota
- **Michael Herring**, Commonwealth's Attorney, Richmond, Virginia
- **Walter Holton**, former U.S. Attorney, Middle District of North Carolina
- **James E. Johnson**, former Undersecretary, U.S. Department of Treasury
- **B. Todd Jones**, former Director, U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
- **G. Douglas Jones**, former U.S. Attorney, Northern District of Alabama
- **Tom Manger**, President, Major Cities Chiefs' Association
- **Kathleen O'Toole**, Chief, Seattle Police Department
- **Melba Pearson**, President, National Black Prosecutors Association
- **Timothy Purdon**, former U.S. Attorney, District of North Dakota
- **Charles Ramsey**, Commissioner, Philadelphia Police Department
- **Eric Schneiderman**, Attorney General, New York
- **Rich Stanek**, Sheriff, Hennepin County, former President; Major County Sheriffs Association
- **Cy Vance**, District Attorney, New York County, New York

“As the public servants working every day to keep our citizens safe, we can say from experience that we can bring down both incarceration and crime together,” said **Law Enforcement Leaders Co-Chair Garry McCarthy, Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department**. “Good crime control policy does not involve arresting and imprisoning masses of people. It involves arresting and imprisoning the right people. Arresting and imprisoning low-level offenders prevents us from focusing resources on violent crime. While some may find it counterintuitive, we know that we can reduce crime and reduce unnecessary arrests and incarceration at the same time.”

Members of the group will work within their departments as well as with policymakers to pursue reforms around four policy priorities:

- *Increasing alternatives to arrest and prosecution, especially mental health and drug treatment.* Policies within police departments and prosecutor offices should divert people with mental health and drug addiction issues away from arrest, prosecution, and imprisonment and instead into proper treatment.
- *Reducing unnecessary severity of criminal laws by reclassifying some felonies to misdemeanors or removing criminal sanctions, where appropriate.*
- *Reducing or eliminating mandatory minimum laws* that require overly harsh, arbitrary sentences for crimes.
- *Strengthening ties between law enforcement and communities* by promoting strategies that keep the public safe, improve community relations, and increase community engagement.

“Our decision to come together reflects the deep commitment among law enforcement’s ranks to end unnecessary, widespread incarceration,” said **Law Enforcement Leaders Co-Chair Ronal Serpas, former Superintendent of the New Orleans Police Department**. “As leaders of the law enforcement community, we are committed to building a smarter, stronger, and fairer criminal justice system. We do not want to see families and communities wrecked by our current system. Forming this new organization will allow us to engage policymakers and support changes to federal and state laws, as well as practices, to end unnecessary incarceration.”

Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime and Incarceration is launching at a time when crime in the United States is at its lowest levels in half a century, but our country’s incarceration rate is the highest in the world.

The new organization is being welcomed by other criminal justice reform advocates.

“Too many Americans, particularly low-income communities and communities of color, are being torn apart by our overly punitive justice system,” **said Cornell Brooks, President and CEO of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. “Seeing law enforcement officials from across the country come together to address problems in the justice system sends a powerful message. We welcome these leaders to our efforts.”

“There is no validation more important to our efforts to reduce incarceration and enhance public safety than the word of the men and women we entrust to protect our communities,” **said Mark Holden, Senior Vice President and General Counsel of Koch Industries**. “Today, the nation’s most respected law enforcement leaders declare their support for efforts to reduce incarceration. Our current system is a disservice to them. It requires law enforcement to handle issues that aren’t necessarily criminal in nature and creates friction with the communities they serve. They deserve better than this and so do the Americans they protect and serve.”

Law Enforcement Leaders is a project of the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law. “Today, law enforcement joins the growing bipartisan movement of lawmakers, advocacy groups, scholars, and communities of color calling for an end to mass incarceration. Law Enforcement Leaders is a critical, and long needed, addition to our efforts,” **said Inimai Chettiar, Director of the Brennan Center’s Justice Program**.

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About Law Enforcement Leaders

Law Enforcement Leaders unites more than 130 current and former police chiefs, sheriffs, federal and state prosecutors, and attorneys general from all 50 states to urge for a reduction in both crime and incarceration. We believe that the country can reduce incarceration while keeping down crime, and we support changes to our criminal justice system to achieve that goal.

Read our *Statement of Principles* [here](#).

See a full list of members [here](#).

For more information on Law Enforcement Leaders, visit www.lawenforcementleaders.org.