



**LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS**  
To Reduce Crime & Incarceration

## **GOP, Law Enforcement Hit Back on Sentencing Reform**

*Republicans and Law Enforcement Push Back on Faulty Arguments from Cotton, Sessions, Cruz*

WASHINGTON, D.C. - As a handful of Republican Senators, including Tom Cotton (R-Arkansas), Jeff Sessions (R-Alabama), and Ted Cruz (R-Texas), have come out against federal sentencing reform, a large group of their Republican colleagues and law enforcement leaders held a briefing this week to push for passage of the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2015.

The briefing was one of two Capitol Hill events [Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime and Incarceration](#) participated in this week. Members also met with members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. The group — made up of 165 current and former attorneys general, police chiefs, and U.S. attorneys — are pushing for federal sentencing reform, arguing the measure would protect public safety and reduce bloated prison populations.

Tuesday's briefing featured remarks from Sens. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) and Mike Lee (R-Utah). They are original cosponsors of the bill.

Grassley hit back against criticism from fellow Republicans that the bill would jeopardize public safety. The bill “doesn’t indiscriminately release dangerous criminals,” [said Grassley, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee](#). “Our sentencing bill is a compromise that shows that senators from both sides of the aisle and senators from different political perspectives can come together to address a serious problem in a reasonable and responsible way,” he added.

The events come on the heels of two letters from top law enforcement officials urging Congress to pass the bill. Republican leaders [circulated the letters to colleagues](#) to showcase strong support from the law enforcement community.

At Tuesday's event, **Lee** noted that “the opponents of this bill have arguments that are not fully grounded in facts.”

**Michael B. Mukasey**, the former U.S. Attorney General under George W. Bush, called today's sentencing practices arbitrary. “Shortening sentences will work for public safety,” he said. “Most people in prison aren’t ones responsible for the country’s drug problem,” he added.

Other panelists said they had a hard time understanding why all law enforcement wouldn't support the bill.

“I’m a Republican,” said **Richard Pocker**, former U.S. Attorney for the District of Nevada. “I’m flabbergasted by assistant U.S. Attorneys opposing this bill. I can understand how young fiery prosecutors oppose this bill, but now with the experience I have, we need this reform.”

“To Republicans, law enforcement is asking you to get behind this bill,” added **Brett Tolman**, former U.S. Attorney for the District of Utah.

“We were there when these tough on crime policies were enacted. Now we know that we need to switch course,” said **Ronal Serpas**, chairman of Law Enforcement Leaders and former superintendent of the New Orleans Police Department.

Click [here](#) to watch video of Tuesday’s briefing. (Because of technical difficulties, the video only shows the second half of the event.)

For more information, or to set up an interview with a Law Enforcement Leaders member, please contact Sam Scarrow at [sam.scarrow@berlinrosen.com](mailto:sam.scarrow@berlinrosen.com) or 646-755-6106.