



LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS

To Reduce Crime & Incarceration

March 22, 2017

Hon. John A. Alario Jr.
Louisiana State Senate
900 North Third Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Hon. Taylor F. Barras
Louisiana House of Representatives
900 North Third Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

RE: Louisiana Justice Reinvestment Task Force Recommendations

Dear President Alario, Speaker Barras and Honorable Members of the Louisiana Legislature:

As current and former leaders in law enforcement, we know protecting public safety is vital. Our experience has shown us that the country can reduce crime while also reducing unnecessary arrests, prosecutions, and incarceration. The recommendations in the Louisiana Justice Reinvestment Task Force Report, outlined below, represent commonsense measures that will help achieve this goal.

We speak from firsthand experience: we all come from states that have successfully enacted similar measures. By reducing unnecessary incarceration, our states strengthened our justice systems, increased accountability and improved public safety. Louisiana now has the opportunity to do the same. In considering these important reform proposals, we hope you will look to our states as examples.

For example, in 2007, Texas lawmakers invested in drug courts and rehabilitation programs to divert low-level offenders out of the state's prisons and reduce recidivism, helping to avert an additional \$2 billion in new prison spending. Between 2006 and 2014, the state's crime rate fell by 26 percent.ⁱ South Carolina ended mandatory minimum sentencing for drug possession and enacted other reforms in 2010. In the next four years, the state saw a 9 percent decrease in the prison population and a 17 percent decrease in violent crime.ⁱⁱ And in 2012, the Georgia General Assembly increased the felony threshold for theft crimes and expanded use of sentencing alternatives. Since passage, Georgia's state prison population dropped by 10.3 percent; the state continues to enjoy historically low crime rates.ⁱⁱⁱ

We believe that several of the recommendations in the Justice Reinvestment Task Force Report will strengthen Louisiana's justice system and reduce unnecessary incarceration. Specifically, we urge the state to prioritize expanding alternatives to incarceration, revising low-level drug and property offenses and investment in development of recidivism reduction programs.

We are dedicated to fighting crime, understanding that it is in the interest of the entire country to vigilantly combat criminal activity. We are proud that our efforts have helped reduce crime to historic lows. But we must continue to keep it down. To achieve this goal, we must replace ineffective criminal justice policies with new more effective solutions. By changing our laws to focus the most serious punishments on the most serious offenders our states have shown that it is possible to save money and reduce unnecessary incarceration while improving public safety.

We believe that recommendations to increase use of alternatives to incarceration, revise low-level drug and property offenses and invest in the development of recidivism reductions programs, put forth by the Justice Reinvestment Task Force will be a step towards strengthening justice and public safety in Louisiana. We commend you for your leadership and prioritization of this vital issue facing Louisiana and our nation.

Respectfully yours,

Hassan Aden
Executive Fellow, Police Foundation
Former Police Chief, Greenville, North Carolina

Eric Atkinson
Police Chief, Menomonie, Wisconsin

Kenton Buckner
Police Chief, Little Rock, Arkansas

Jerry Clayton
Sheriff, Washtenaw County, Michigan

Barry Grissom
Former U.S. Attorney, District of Kansas

Greg Hamilton
Former Sheriff, Travis County, Texas

Andrew Holmes
Former Sheriff, Smith County, Kansas

Benjamin David
District Attorney, 5th Prosecutorial District, New Hanover County & Pender County, North Carolina

Richard Deane, Jr.
Former President, National Association of Former United States Attorneys
Former U.S. Attorney, Northern District of Georgia

G. Douglas Jones
Former U.S. Attorney, Northern District of Alabama

George Kral
Police Chief, Toledo, Ohio

Robert S. Lausten
Police Chief, La Vista, Nebraska

Leon Lott
Sheriff, Richland County, South Carolina

Brad Pigott
Former U.S. Attorney, District of Mississippi

Gary Raney
Former Sheriff, Ada County, Idaho

David Soares
District Attorney, Albany County, New York

ⁱ Chris Deusch, National Ass'n of Drug Court Professionals, Texas Governor Rick Perry Receives National Award for Criminal Justice Reform, GLOBE NEWSWIRE (Apr. 2, 2014), <http://globenewswire.com/news-release/2014/04/02/624008/10075266/en/Texas-Governor-Rick-Perry-ReceivesNational-Award-for-Criminal-Justice-Reform.html>; *see also* Bureau Of Justice Statistics, Corrections Statistical Analysis Tool (CSAT) – Prisoners, <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=np> (providing prison population data by state from 2005-2015); Fed. Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Statistics, 2015 (2016), <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2015/%20crime-in-the-u.s.-2015> (providing crime and population data by state from 2005-2015).

ⁱⁱ *See generally* GREGORY NEWBURN, AM. LEGISLATIVE EXCH. COUNCIL, THE STATE FACTOR (Mar. 2016), <https://www.alec.org/app/uploads/2016/03/2016-March-ALEC-CJR-State-Factor-Mandatory-Minimum-Sentencing-Reform-Saves-States-Money-and-Reduces-Crime-Rates.pdf>. *Compare* PAUL GUERINO, ET AL., BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS, PRISONERS IN 2010 14 app. tbl.1 (2011), <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p10.pdf> (showing 23,578 prisoners incarcerated in South Carolina in 2010) *with* E. ANN CARSON, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, PRISONERS IN 2014 3 tbl.2 (2015), <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p14.pdf> (showing 21,401 prisoners incarcerated in South Carolina in 2014). *Compare* UCR Data Online, UNIF. CRIME REPORTING STATISTICS, <http://ucrdatatool.gov/index.cfm> (providing crime statistics from 1960 to 2012 and showing the South Carolina violent crime rate was 602.2 per 100,000 people in 2010) *with* UCR Data Online, CRIME IN THE UNITED STATES, 2014 tbl.5 (2015), <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2014/crime-in-the-u.s.-2014> (showing the South Carolina violent crime rate was 497.7 per 100,000 people in 2014).

ⁱⁱⁱ Nathan Deal, Georgia's Story of Redemption: Criminal Justice Reform is Saving Lives and Preserving Families, Washington Times (Oct.18, 2016), <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/oct/18/georgias-criminal-justice-reform-saving-lives-pres/>. *See also* UCR Data Online, Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics, <http://ucrdatatool.gov/index.cfm> (showing 38,097 violent crimes in Georgia in 2014; 36,541 in 2013; 37,591 in 2012, and violent crime totals above 39,000 from 1988-2009).