



The City of
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KEITH L. HUMPHREY - CHIEF OF POLICE
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May 25, 2017

Speaker Charles McCall
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd.
Room 401
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Chairman Scott Biggs
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd.
Room 244
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

RE: HB 2286, HB 2281, SB 786, SB 649, SB 689

Dear Speaker McCall and Chairman Biggs,

I write to you today to urge you to take action on House Bills 2286 and 2281, and on Senate Bills 786, 649 and 689. The commonsense reforms contained in this legislation will strengthen Oklahoma's justice system and improve public safety.

I know from experience as a leader in the law enforcement community that effective crime control policy is not about locking everyone up – rather we must target our law enforcement and punishment resources to the most serious and violent offenders.

Unfortunately, the Oklahoma criminal justice system is not as focused as it should be on our most dangerous threats. In FY 2015, 75 percent of Oklahoma prison admissions were for non-violent crimes.¹ Many of these offenders suffer from addiction and mental health disorders. They need help, but our prisons and jails are ill-suited treatment centers. Without proper treatment, when these people are released they are, at best, no better off than when they went in – and often worse. This wastes law enforcement resources and makes us all less safe.

While some fear that reductions in prison populations will lead to an increase in crime, Oklahoma can turn to other states for guidance. In fact, states across the nation have made changes to their laws and saw a correlating drop in crime. 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.² South Carolina ended mandatory minimum sentencing for drug possession 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.³ 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.⁴

Louisiana, the only state with a higher incarceration rate than Oklahoma, is poised this week to pass an ambitious slate of similar reforms. Our state will then take on the title of the number one incarcerator in the country.⁵

Through this legislation, we can improve the safety of our communities and improve the effectiveness of our criminal justice system. I urge your immediate action on these critical reforms.

Sincerely,



Keith L. Humphrey
Chief of Police

¹ See OKLAHOMA JUSTICE REFORM TASK FORCE, FINAL REPORT 3 (2017).

² Press Release, National Ass'n of Drug Court Professionals, Texas Governor Rick Perry Receives National Award for Criminal Justice Reform, Apr. 2, 2014, <http://globenewswire.com/news-release/2014/04/02/624008/10075266/en/Texas-Governor-Rick-Perry-Receives-National-Award-for-Criminal-Justice-Reform.html>; see also *Corrections Statistical Analysis Tool (CSAT) – Prisoners*, BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS, <https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=nps> (providing prison population data by state from 2005-2015); FED. BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, 2015 CRIME IN THE UNITED STATES (2016), <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2015/crime-in-the-u.s.-2015> (providing crime and population data by state from 2005-2015).

³ 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); also compare *UCR Data Online*, UNIF. CRIME REPORTING STATISTICS, <http://www.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).

⁴ Nathan Deal, *Georgia's Story of Redemption: Criminal Justice Reform is Saving Lives and Preserving Families*, WASH. 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).

⁵ John Simerman, *Louisiana Could Soon Lose Title as Incarceration Capital, With or Without Reforms*, THE ADVOCATE, May 23, 2017, http://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/politics/legislature/article_c79ad504-3f23-11e7-ac58-fb249f8e45fe.html.