



## LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS

To Reduce Crime & Incarceration



### Oklahoma Governor Becomes National Champion for Criminal Justice Reform

With pressure to construct more prisons impending, the Oklahoma Justice Reform Task Force released a package of recommended criminal justice reforms earlier this year spearheaded by Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin (R), and backed by members of Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime and Incarceration. The recommendations ranged from sentencing reclassification to mandatory minimum reforms and probation reforms; and proposed an estimated savings of \$1.9 billion over the next decade.

Law Enforcement Leader member and Norman, Oklahoma Police Chief Keith Humphrey sent a [letter](#) to the Governor applauding her leadership and expressing support for the package. Police chiefs from neighboring states showed their support in another [letter](#). Humphrey and co-chair of Law Enforcement Leaders Ronal Serpas also penned an [op-ed](#) in the largest state newspaper.

While the entire package faltered in the state legislature, Gov. Fallin signed into law three measures to provide more individualized help for inmates reentering society, and additional training for law enforcement and court officials on domestic abuse, behavioral health, and domestic violence.

In her [State of the State](#) address earlier this year, Fallin highlighted the need for reform and the broad support it has not only from groups like Law Enforcement Leaders but in state legislatures across the country.

“There is unprecedented conservative support on this issue from groups such as the American Conservative Union and Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime and Incarceration,” she said. “Meanwhile, smart, conservative states such as Texas, Utah, Georgia, Kentucky and South Dakota are already headed this direction and these states have seen better public safety outcomes by pursuing similar reforms.”



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### Louisiana Passes Historic Criminal Justice Reform Laws

Louisiana has the highest rate of incarceration in the country, and a new set of laws recently signed into law by Gov. John Bel Edwards (D) based on the state's [Justice Reform Task Force](#) recommendations and the support of law enforcement look to reverse that trend.

Following the release of Louisiana's Justice Reinvestment Task Force recommendations, 18 current and former police and prosecutors sent [two letters](#) to state legislative leaders supporting its commonsense policies to reduce crime and unnecessary incarceration simultaneously. Ronal Serpas, co-chair of Law Enforcement Leaders and the former superintendent of the New Orleans Police Department, backed [the effort with testimony](#) and wrote [a piece](#) the New Orleans Times-Picayune about the need for change.

Backed by [Law Enforcement Leaders](#) and the Louisiana District Attorneys Association, the new measures, among other things, reform the state's practices of fining defendants, expand alternatives to incarceration, and reinvest a portion of the money saved from the changes back into the criminal justice system.

"Rather than punishing the 'worst of the worst,' this costly prison space is being filled with low-level offenders, many who face mental health and addiction issues," Serpas wrote. "Without proper treatment, when people are released they are, at best, no better off than when they went in - and often worse. Not surprisingly, the governor's task force found that one in three people released from Louisiana prisons are reincarcerated within three years. This wastes resources and diverts law enforcement from proactively preventing crime, making us all less safe."



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## Law Enforcement Leader Outlines Approach for Fighting Crime, Reducing Incarceration

Bipartisan efforts to reduce federal criminal sentences continue. “It’s time to recalibrate federal sentencing laws to better protect public safety,” wrote Richard Pocker in a [USA Today](#) column published earlier this month. Pocker is a former U.S. Attorney for the District of Nevada under George H.W. Bush and a Law Enforcement Leaders member.

Writing in response to the Justice Department’s recent policy shift, requiring prosecutors to pursue the strictest penalties available for a crime, Pocker called for an approach that focuses the most severe punishments on the most violent offenders.

“Certainly, prison is a necessary punishment for crime,” he writes. “But, we must ensure that we use this tool effectively — targeting violent criminals with more resources and longer sentences than other offenders. My experience has shown me that this method better controls and deters crime than seeking the most severe punishment possible for every lawbreaker.”

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Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime and Incarceration unites more than 175 current and former police chiefs, federal and state chief prosecutors, and attorneys general from all 50 states to urge for a reduction in both crime and incarceration. With this group, law enforcement joins the emerging movement calling for an end to unnecessary, widespread incarceration.

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