



# LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS

To Reduce Crime & Incarceration

Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime and Incarceration closed out 2018 with some big wins. The latest data show crime and violence down across the country, and bipartisan legislation to reduce unnecessary incarceration was signed into law.



## Law Enforcement Leaders Critical to FIRST STEP Act Signed into Law

In December, President Trump signed a bipartisan criminal justice reform bill with robust sentencing reform, after it overwhelmingly passed both chambers.

The First Step Act, which shortens sentences for some offenders and expands job training and other programs for prisoners, underscores a major shift in the criminal justice

landscape from the punitive, law-and-order approach of the 1980s to policies that emphasize rehabilitation and reducing costs. The law started as an effort only to reform prison conditions. However, spurred in part by members of our law enforcement community, Congress and the White House came to a historic compromise that would combine prison reform with necessary changes to outdated and ineffective sentencing laws.

Law Enforcement Leaders publicly advocated for the First Step Act, and offered [long-standing support](#) for its predecessor bill, the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act since our launch in 2015. It's a welcome victory for our mission. Law Enforcement Leaders was [joined](#) by the Fraternal Order of Police — the largest law enforcement labor organization in the U.S. — and the [International Association of Chiefs of Police](#) and the [National District Attorneys Association](#), standing with President Trump as he announced his support for the measure.

LEL Executive Director **Ronal Serpas**, [wrote](#) to President Trump to share our members views on how prison and sentencing reform is vital to keeping our nation safe. We also published a [briefing memo](#) analyzing key provisions, and over 60 members signed a [letter to Senate and House leadership](#) in support of the bill. Former U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Virginia **Timothy Heaphy**, represented the group in a series of meetings on Capitol Hill and White House officials including Jared Kushner. **Brett Tolman**, former U.S. Attorney for Utah and LEL Board Member, [came together](#) with allies at Sen. Mitch McConnell's alma mater to call for criminal justice reform and played a critical role advocating for the bill, also being present at the president's announcement and at the bill signing.

**Sen. Charles Grassley** (R-Iowa), chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and **Sen. Dick Durbin** (D-Ill.) [both cited](#) the [group's support](#) as important in the fight for commonsense change. Grassley wrote an op-ed in [Fox News](#) referencing Law Enforcement Leaders' advocacy efforts.

“Current criminal justice policies do not effectively stop the cycle of crime: they get in the way of smart, effective law enforcement and put people in prison who don't belong there,” said **Serpas** in [a statement](#). “Packaging sentencing reform measures alongside the prison reforms offered within the FIRST STEP Act will reduce recidivism and help law enforcement concentrate on what really matters: serious, violent threats to public safety.”

Read more in [New York Times](#), [CNN](#), [Axios](#), [Politico](#), and [Newsweek](#). And read these op-eds in favor of the bill by [Serpas](#) in *The [Wall Street Journal](#)* and *The [Advocate](#)*, Washington D.C. Police Chief [Peter Newsham](#) in *The [Hill](#)*, [Heaphy](#) in *The [Virginia Pilot](#)*, Cumberland County Oregon Sheriff [Kevin Joyce](#) in *The [Portland Press Herald](#)* and [Maine Public Radio](#), and Story County Iowa Sheriff [Paul Fitzgerald](#) in *The [Des Moines Register](#)*.



## Minnesota Law Enforcement Leaders Convention

Nearly 100 law enforcement and prosecution officials from Ramsey, Hennepin, and other neighboring counties convened for a leadership conference to discuss how to improve public safety and justice for the residents of Minnesota.

**Serpas** delivered a keynote presentation, putting forward our vision of improving public

safety for communities. Hennepin County Sheriff **Richard Stanek** and Ramsey Police Chief **Todd Axtell** of Ramsey, led a discussion on how police officers and prosecutors incubate innovative programs in their offices to reduce incarceration and crime.

“While we all have been implementing innovative changes, this first convening of law enforcement and prosecution leaders in Minnesota’s two largest counties to coalesce around the vision of reducing crime and incarceration at the same time is an important step forward to a better and more effective criminal justice system,” said Ramsey County Attorney **John Choi**, who hosted and spearheaded the convention.

Read more in the local [NBC](#), [CBS](#), [FOX](#), [ABC](#), [Twin Cities Pioneer Press](#), [MPR News](#), and [Sun Focus](#).

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## State Reform Victories in 2018

- The group has worked with Gov. Mary Fallin of Oklahoma since 2017 on a package of bills. Since then, Law Enforcement Leaders continued its work there, helping secure passage of the legislation last year by sending multiple letters, publishing op-eds, and reaching out to legislators, while securing support from local media. The package will adopt a more targeted approach that directs law enforcement resources towards violent crime, while providing alternative responses for those who do not present a threat to public safety. As the package was being negotiated, Oklahoma City Police Chief **Keith Humphrey** [wrote a letter](#) to leaders of the state legislature, reinforcing law enforcement support of this opportunity to join other states in enacting effective reforms.
  - Some in Louisiana questioned the efficacy of a criminal justice reform package that passed last year. **Serpas, former New Orleans Police Superintendent**, published an [op-ed](#) encouraging lawmakers to give the reforms time to work. Louisiana’s reforms were modeled on successful efforts in states that have demonstrably improved public safety, reduced crime, and saved taxpayer money.
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## Members Lead in Their Jurisdictions

Members continued to work to advance modern innovations in their offices across the country.

- Manhattan District Attorney **Cyrus Vance** moved to dismiss more than 3,000 marijuana cases dating back to 1978. The move came after the NYPD implemented a new policy of issuing summonses to most people caught smoking marijuana in public, rather than arresting them.
- Oklahoma's Norman Police Department, led by Police Chief **Keith Humphrey**, began a new partnership with the Police Training Institute to take part in the "Fight Crime: Invest in Kids" program. The partnership gives the agency tools to help officers improve interactions with youth and promote community policing.
- The National Sheriffs' Association and the National Commission on Correctional Health Care highlighted the Middlesex Sheriff's MATADOR Program as one a national best practices for providing treatment in jails. This effective program is spearheaded by Sheriff **Peter Koutoujian**.
- Gallatin County Sheriff's Office instituted "Jail to Jobs." Led by **Sheriff Brian Goodkin**, the program aims to reduce recidivism and aid the economy by helping inmates find jobs after their release.
- Last November, Floridians from all walks of life – including leaders from veterans, faith, business, and law enforcement groups – organized to pass a ballot measure to restore voting rights to people with past convictions. **Rev. Allison DeFoor** of Jacksonville and former Monroe County Sheriff lead this effort on behalf of LEL, in the Sunshine State. He explained that allowing citizens with prior convictions to earn back their voting eligibility gives them a deeper stake in their community, making them less likely to reoffend.

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## Grants Available -- Gun Violence Research

There are more than 38,000 firearm deaths and 115,000 injuries from firearms per year in

the United States. The National Collaborative on Gun Violence Research, recently launched by Laura and John Arnold Foundation, will support carefully selected, rigorous data-driven research designed to broaden agreement on the facts associated with gun policy, and support development of fair and effective policies. The Collaborative is requesting proposals that will kick off a five-year initiative that will offer \$20-50 million in grants. We encourage Law Enforcement Leaders members to participate and submit proposals if interested. Letters of Interest are due **February 4, 2019**. To receive notice of funding opportunities, visit [NCGVR.org](http://NCGVR.org) and sign up.

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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.

- For media inquiries contact [media@lawenforcementleaders.org](mailto:media@lawenforcementleaders.org)
- For all other inquiries, please contact [info@lawenforcementleaders.org](mailto:info@lawenforcementleaders.org)
- To become a Law Enforcement Leaders member, contact us [here](#).



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