



LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS

To Reduce Crime & Incarceration



Taryn Merkl Joins as Senior Counsel

We are thrilled to introduce Taryn Merkl, the new Senior Counsel for Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime & Incarceration.

In her new role, Taryn is responsible for all oversight and operations of Law Enforcement Leaders. She will supervise the group's staff and work.

Taryn joins us after an accomplished nearly two-decade career as a federal prosecutor at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York. She served as Deputy Chief of the Criminal Division, Chief of the Civil Rights Section, and Chief of the Organized Crime & Gangs Section. As Chief of Organized Crime & Gangs, she supervised all cases in the section, as well as the largest take-down of traditional organized crime in the history of the U.S. Department of Justice. As Deputy Chief of the Criminal Division, she supervised the work of the prosecutors in all sections of the office, including terrorism, gang, international narcotics, human trafficking, money laundering, white collar, cybercrime, and public corruption cases. As a member of law enforcement herself, she shares our group's strong commitment to reducing crime and incarceration together.

With Taryn on board, we will begin preparations for our next annual event and members meeting and reinvigorate our research, advocacy, and work.

Taryn can be reached at Taryn.Merkl@lawenforcemenleaders.org.

Leading Advocacy in States

North Carolina: In April, two dozen members of Law Enforcement Leaders from 17 states signed a [letter](#) supporting the North Carolina First Step Act, which would allow judges discretion to depart from mandatory minimums in some cases. Our members called on their own experiences serving in jurisdictions that have implemented such laws consistently with public safety.

South Carolina: Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott wrote an op-ed in [The State](#) to call for funding to implement the state's legislation to raise the age of when a youth offender is tried in adult court. The measure passed the legislature's budget committee and was included in the recently passed state budget. The budget measure passed in time to ensure needed funding in advance of the effective date of raise the age in July.

Members Lead in Their Jurisdictions

This quarter, our members continued to advance innovations in their offices across the country.

- Camden Police Chief **J. Scott Thomson** [announced](#) that his city saw a dramatic reduction in crime after a reorganization of the police force to focus on centralized community policing. In the five years since the reorganization, all crime categories were reduced by double digits, bringing crime to a 50-year low.
- Following recommendations included in Law Enforcement Leaders Executive Board Member **Jim Johnson**'s comprehensive [report](#) on revitalizing Atlantic City, New Jersey, the city [launched a community policing program](#) and held its [first meeting](#) of a newly-created [citizens advisory board](#).
- As momentum grows in Minnesota for a bill restoring voting rights for probationers, Ramsey County Attorney **John Choi** [testified](#) in favor of the measure, observing that the legislation would remove all confusion about voter registration eligibility and increase successful reintegration into society.

- Texas law enforcement officials, including Houston Police Chief **Art Acevedo**, **announced** the expansion of a diversion program to keep low-level non-violent misdemeanor offenders with mental health problems out of jail.
- Sheriff **Peter Koutoujian** of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, co-authored a letter to the editor in the ***Washington Post*** calling for the end of the practice of terminating Medicaid coverage for inmates, especially in light of the opioid crisis.
- Virginia's Commonwealth's Attorney **Bryan Porter** formed a new **drug treatment court** in Alexandria to provide treatment as an alternative to incarceration for offenders with drug addiction. He also wrote in the ***Alexandria Times*** about his plan to comprehensively review his office's practices to identify areas for reform.
- In North Carolina, Bladen, Brunswick & Columbus Counties District Attorney **Jon David** **announced** a free expungement project for non-violent offenders. David's office partnered with volunteer attorneys and students from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Law to assist community members with applying to expunge their records.

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Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime and Incarceration unites nearly 200 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 inquiries, please contact info@lawenforcementleaders.org
- To become a Law Enforcement Leaders member, contact us [here](#).



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