



April 26, 2017

Support the Louisiana Justice Reinvestment Task Force Recommendations

On behalf of the FreedomWorks activist community in Louisiana, I urge you to support the Louisiana Justice Reinvestment Task Force's policy recommendations. FreedomWorks has supported justice reinvestment initiatives at the state level and continues to urge state lawmakers to pursue these common sense policies that lower recidivism rates, save taxpayers money, and enhance public safety.

This reinvestment package would save taxpayers nearly \$305 million while reinvesting \$154 million into evidence-based programs and services that reduce recidivism and support victims. The recommendations from the Justice Reinvestment Task Force for 2017 are outlined below:

- SB 16 provides parole eligibility for juveniles who have received lengthy sentences.
- SB 139 provides alternatives to incarceration, in turn lowering recidivism and improving public safety. This bill would provide the offender the opportunity to earn discharge credits, which would be structured in a way that calculates factors like the offender's criminal history with severity of behavior, to aim for higher public safety.
- SB 220 separates crimes into six different categories depending on type and severity. The goal is to simplify the current sentencing system by improving consistency among sentencing.
- SB 221 calculates the current cleansing period after ten years to "sufficient time" for repeat offenders.
- HB 116 prioritizes the safety of the victims of the crime by allowing them to register and have the opportunity to submit a reentry statement that would be used to put certain restrictions and protections in place upon the offender being reintroduced back into society.

- HB 177 repeals restrictions for ex-offenders of drug convictions, providing eligibility for SNAP.
- HB 249 holds all citizens equal before the law in regards to financial obligations tied to criminal sentencing. This legislation would take into account financial hardship and circumstances regarding dependents of the offender.
- HB 426 requires judges to determine whether a material change in circumstances exists related to child support payments if an offender is incarcerated for more than 30 days.
- HB 489 reinvests savings from the justice reform initiatives, 30 percent to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections for grants to nonprofits, 20 percent to the Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Criminal Justice for victim services, and the rest will be invested into programs that reduce recidivism and makes entry back into society easier, which in turns strengthens community safety.
- HB 519 strike the term “provisional” from the Licenses for Ex-Offenders Act, allowing those reentering society to obtain occupational licenses.

After noting the successes of conservative states like Texas, Georgia, and South Carolina that have improved their criminal justice system, by enacting common sense solutions it is no question that other conservative states should follow suite.

More than 30 states have implemented comprehensive sentencing and corrections reforms to focus their efforts on locking up violent criminals. The results are quite clear: as incarceration rates decrease, crime rates also decrease. The Justice Reinvestment Task Force’s recommendations would decrease the prison population in Louisiana, which has the highest incarceration rate in the United States, by 13 percent by 2027.

For the reasons listed above, FreedomWorks supports the Louisiana Justice Reinvestment Task Force’s policy recommendations for 2017. This reinvestment package is crucial to reforming criminal sentencing to lower recidivism, increase public safety and improve fiscal responsibility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Brandon', with a stylized, flowing script.

Adam Brandon
President
FreedomWorks