JUSTICE REINVESTMENT INITIATIVE

PRIORITIZING PRISON RESOURCES WHERE THEY MATTER MOST

The Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI) is a partnership with state leaders from all three branches of government committed to using their criminal justice data to examine and improve their systems by implementing proven, innovative, and comprehensive approaches to reduce crime, cut recidivism rates, and shift resources toward more effective public safety strategies.

A central goal for states engaging in JRI is to focus prison space on those who have committed serious, violent, or repeat offenses, freeing up resources to invest in more effective recidivism-reduction strategies.

The Justice Reinvestment Initiative is an intensive, data-driven approach that allows states to address key challenges in their criminal justice systems, including violent crime, opioid addiction, mental illness, corrections costs, and recidivism. Funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the initiative supports states to increase the cost-effectiveness of their justice systems and reinvest the savings into high-performing strategies to increase public safety.

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Achieving the Goal

A key indicator of progress toward prioritizing prison resources where they matter is the increase in the proportion of a state’s prison population comprised of people convicted of violent offenses versus nonviolent offenses.

Four states that received technical assistance from the Crime and Justice Institute, with funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, enacted policies to achieve this goal.

The main strategies to shift the composition of the states’ prison populations include:

1. **Creating** tiered penalties to address violent conduct based on severity

2. **Focusing** recidivism reduction resources on those most likely to reoffend

3. **Prioritizing** earned time for those convicted of nonviolent offenses

4. **Expanding** parole eligibility for those convicted of nonviolent offenses

5. **Increasing** penalties for homicides

6. **Allowing** more nonviolent offenders to earn time off their prison sentence through good behavior and participation in rehabilitative programs

**Alaska**

JRI PASSED IN 2016*

**Louisiana**

JRI PASSED IN 2017

**Alabama Drove This Change By:**

- **Expanding** law enforcement arrest discretion to focus on serious offenses
- **Reclassifying** certain lower-level misdemeanors as violations and some nonviolent felonies as misdemeanors
- **Reducing** presumptive sentencing ranges for some offenses
- **Increasing** penalties for homicides

**Louisiana Drove This Change By:**

- **Reducing** penalties for some nonviolent offenses and expanding eligibility for prison alternatives and treatment for some nonviolent offenses
- **Allowing** more nonviolent offenders to earn time off their prison sentence through good behavior and participation in rehabilitative programs
- **Expanding** parole eligibility to nonviolent, non-sex offenders, including those sentenced under the habitual offender statute

*In 2019, HB 49 rolled back portions of the original legislation.

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