

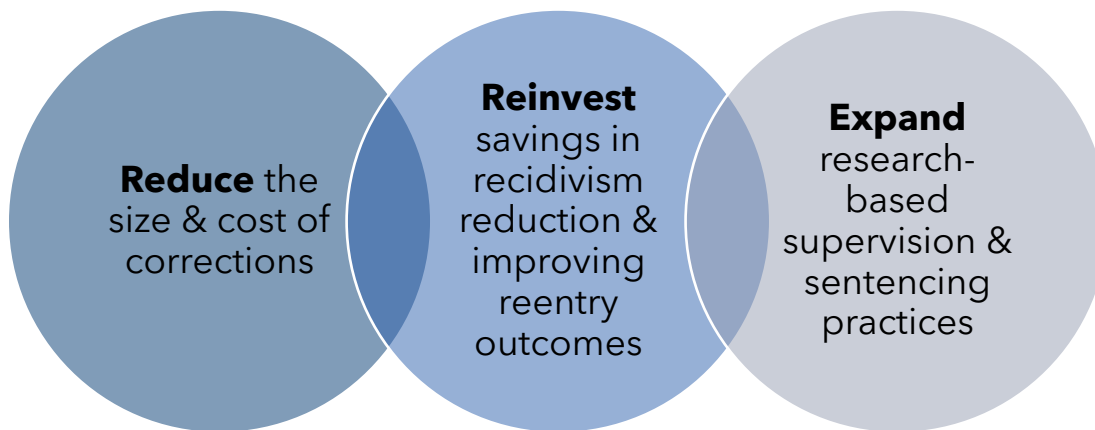
Smart on Crime Legislation

Purpose of Reform

In 2016, Louisiana was the top incarcerator in the country. The corrections system was costing taxpayers **nearly \$700 million annually**, in part because Louisiana prisons were housing people convicted of **non-violent offenses at a rate higher than any neighboring state**. Despite the considerable investment in incarceration, imprisonment was not deterring criminal behaviour, evidenced by the fact that **approximately one in three people released returned to prison within just three years**.

Justice Reinvestment Initiative Legislation

The Legislature created a task force to study criminal justice trends and prioritize three central goals to improve justice system outcomes:



In 2017, bipartisan majorities in the House and Senate passed 10 Smart on Crime bills. These bills were **derived from recommendations made by Louisiana law enforcement officers, court practitioners, community members, legislators, and corrections professionals**.

The Policies

The Smart on Crime policies focused on diverting people convicted of **less serious offenses** away from prison, focus on streamlining release for people who can be better served in the community with effective supervision and recidivism reduction services, and improve reentry for all returning citizens.

Reduce the Size & Cost of Corrections

- Eliminated mandatory minimums and reduces maximum sentences for several non-violent offenses.
- Created a task force to study the creation of a new felony class system.
- Reduced habitual offender penalties by lowering mandatory minimums for second and third felony convictions and eliminating life sentences for fourth and subsequent non-violent offenses.
- Created medical furlough allowing certain individuals to access treatment and medical services in the community.
- Updated penalties for certain offenses including tailoring sentences for drug offenses by weight, reduced penalties for some theft offenses, and raised the felony theft threshold to \$1,000.

Reinvest in Recidivism Reduction & Improve Reentry

- Tailored fines and fees to defendant's ability to pay and authorized payment plans for those facing financial hardship, prioritizing the payment of restitution.
- Lifted the ban on public assistance benefits for people with drug convictions.
- Temporarily suspended child support obligations for people incarcerated 6+ months.
- Simplified the process for people with criminal convictions to receive occupational licenses.
- Mandated data collection to monitor outcomes of criminal justice reform.
- Required LA to reinvest 70% of savings from prison population reduction into community-based alternatives, victim services, and recidivism-reduction programs.

Expand Research-based Supervision & Sentencing Practices

- Expedited parole eligibility and good time release and extended eligibility for certain inmates.
- Authorized administrative parole release for non-violent crimes.
- Expanded eligibility for alternatives to prison, including probation.
- Allowed most people sentenced to life as juveniles to be considered for parole after 25 years served.
- Limited the maximum probation term to three years and created an earned compliance credit system allowing for reduced supervision terms based on condition fulfillment.
- Applied evidence-based research to supervision violation sanctions, creating a tiered sanction system based on violation history.

Sources:

- [Research-based Supervision Data Explorer](#)
- [Data Analytics: Murder Comparison Dashboard](https://www.andanalytics.com/dashboards/ytd-murder-comparison/)
<https://www.andanalytics.com/dashboards/ytd-murder-comparison/>