



REDUCING INCENTIVES TO INCARCERATE

VALUE

Our criminal justice system should keep us safe, treat people fairly and respectfully, and be flexible and ready to change with the times. This means taking a careful look at why and how we imprison people in this country, and making changes in the system when it no longer meets our goals or supports our values.

PROBLEM

However, we are currently saddled with an outdated, unfair and bloated criminal justice system that drains resources and disrupts communities. Our prisons are too big and too full, and our reasons for locking people up are not well-thought out. Adding to this issue, a number of incentives exist that encourage the continuous reliance on prisons. For instance, many communities measure law enforcement success by the volume of prosecutions and prison sentences instead of decreases in crime or improvements in community safety.

SOLUTION

To promote pragmatic law enforcement that supports communities, legislatures should prohibit the evaluation of police and prosecutors that focus on arrest, prosecution or imprisonment numbers over increases in public safety.

ACTION

Tell your legislators to compel prosecutors and police departments to focus on real indicators of community safety instead of numbers that only show their ability to lock people up.