

Policy Options to Increase Public Safety & Manage the Growth of the Prison Population



Kansas policymakers are looking for ways to increase public safety and to manage corrections spending and growth in the prison population. Unless policymakers act, the prison population is projected to increase 26 percent over the next ten years, at a cost to taxpayers of over \$500 million in additional spending over the next ten years.

This policy brief provides options for policymakers interested in increasing public safety and averting the current growth projected for the state's prison population. These options include sustaining the recent reductions in parole revocations, strengthening the community corrections and behavioral health treatment systems to reduce probation revocations, and increasing the percent of offenders completing programs shown to reduce their risk prior to release. This document provides descriptions of the impact that each policy would have on the prison population and provides cost estimates for the purposes of comparing the options against one another. The estimates provided in this policy brief about the impact of these policies on the prison population are based upon various projections developed by the Kansas Sentencing Commission and reference legislation currently being considered by Kansas policymakers.

When considering the options described in this brief, it is important for policymakers to keep the following research-based principles in mind:

- **State and local agencies must implement programs that have been shown to reduce recidivism.** The literature is clear that programs, such as substance abuse treatment, vocational education, and basic education can reduce recidivism. There is no one program, however, that can reduce recidivism for all offenders. Programs are only effective when they are targeted towards offenders whose need for a particular program is related to their criminal behavior. The type of programs needed to reduce the multiple needs and risks of individual offenders is best determined by corrections officials using individualized and objective risk/needs assessments that are validated and research-based.
- **Effective programs cannot do it alone, and must be accompanied by smart policies.** State and local policies must be modified to ensure that services, supervision, and revocations are targeted towards the offenders that pose the highest risk to public safety. The state can achieve the greatest return on its investment by focusing on these offenders and working to appropriately reduce their risk of committing another crime. Clear goals, incentives for meeting those goals, and accountability mechanisms can all be established in policy to help state agencies, local programs, and offenders buy into this approach.

The Justice Center is providing intensive technical assistance to Kansas and a limited number of other states that demonstrate a bipartisan interest in justice reinvestment—a data-driven strategy for policymakers to reduce spending on corrections, increase public safety, and improve conditions in the neighborhoods to which most people released from prison return.

Projected Prison Population (FY2016)¹

10,869

Current Prison Capacity

9,347

Policy Options	Policy Cost (Annual)	Bed Savings (By FY2016)
No Policy Change	—	—
Governor’s Budget Proposal to Sustain 50% Reduction in Parole Revocations	\$2.4m (Gov. Budget) \$1.3m (JEHT Foundation)	223
HB2141: Strengthen Community Corrections and Reduce Revocations by <u>20 Percent</u>	\$4.5m	465
HB2141 + Treatment Capacity Enhancement to Reduce Community Corrections Revocations by <u>30 Percent</u>	\$4.5m + \$3.0m = \$7.5m	687
HB2142: Reduce Risk Prior to Release (60 day Program Completion Credit)		
• Current assumptions of Sentencing Commission ⁴	—	123
• If capacity and completion rates increase (Bed savings impact assumes 50% of offenders complete one program, 10% complete two programs, and program participation reduces recidivism by 10 percent.)	\$3.6m	400
Package 1	\$6.9m	688
• Governor’s Budget Proposal • HB2141: Community Corrections (20%)		
Package 2	\$10.5m	1,088
• Governor’s Budget Proposal • HB2141: Community Corrections (20%) • <u>HB2142: Program Credit (60 days)</u>		
Package 3	\$10.5m	1,477
• Governor’s Budget Proposal • HB2141: Community Corrections (20%) • HB2142: Program Credit (60 days) • <u>Increase good time from 15% to 20% (non-retroactive)</u> (FY2017 Bed Impact: -389)		
Package 4	\$13.5m	1,699
• Governor’s Budget Proposal • HB2141 + <u>Treatment Enhancement (30%)</u> • HB2142: Program Credit (60 days) • Increase good time from 15% to 20% (non-retroactive) (FY2017 Bed Impact: -389)		

1. The official Kansas Sentencing Commission prison population projection issued for FY2007 projected a prison population in FY2007 of 9,185 and in FY2016 of 11,231. However, due to lower numbers of parole and probation revocations in late FY2006 and in FY2007, the

prison population at the end of FY2007 is now estimated to be 8,896, or 289 beds lower than the projection estimated. The FY2016 projected prison population listed here accounts for this lower “starting point” for the projection in FY2007.



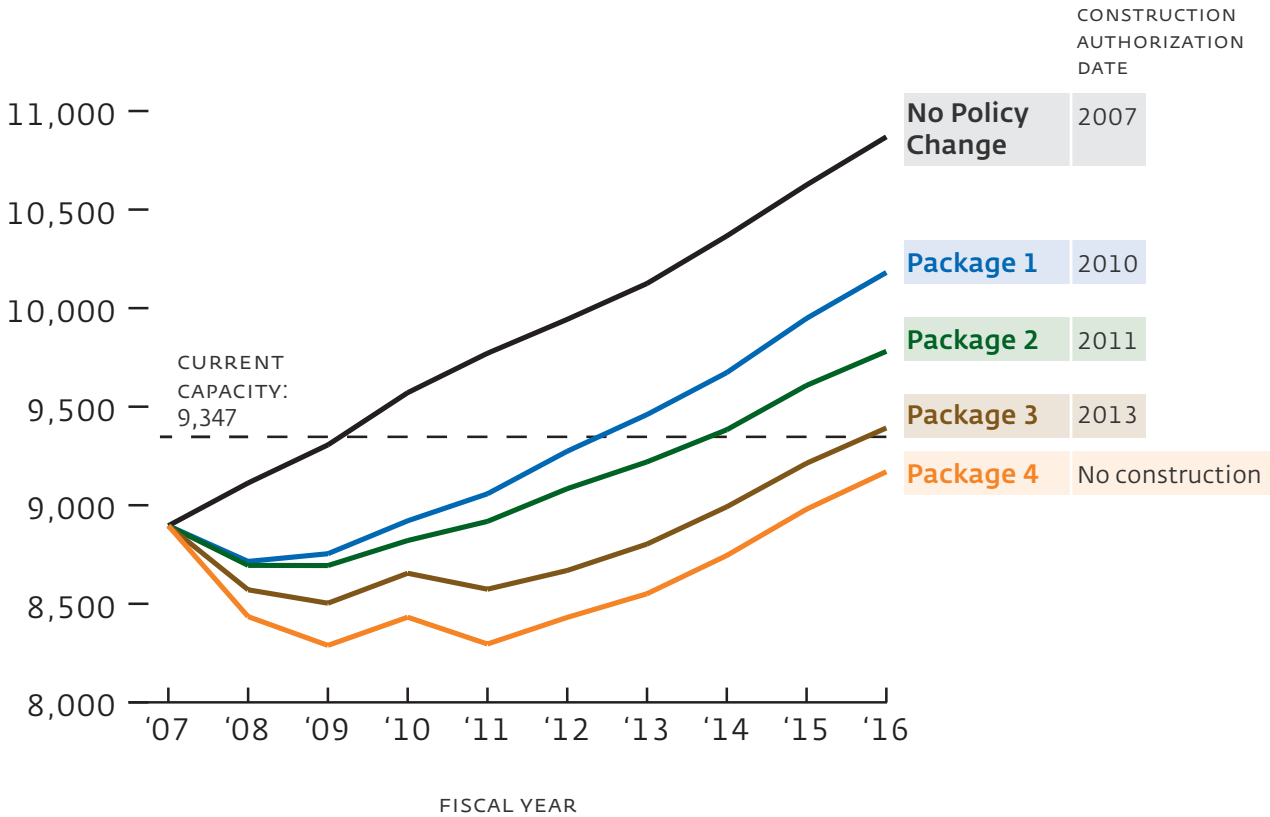
Return on Investment: Annual Cost of Averting One Prison Bed	Additional Prison Beds Needed ² (By FY2016)	Prison Construction Required by FY2016 & Annual Operating Cost ³ (One Time Construction & Annual Operating Cost)	Comparative Cost Annual Policy Cost + One Time Construction Cost + Annual Operating
—	1,522	\$186m + \$50m = \$236m	\$236m
\$11,000	1,299		
\$10,000	1,057		
\$11,000	835		
	1,399		
\$9,000	1,122		
\$10,000	834	\$46m + \$18.5m = \$64.5m	\$71m
\$9,600	434	\$26.4m + \$10m = \$36.4m	\$47m
\$7,000	45	\$22m + \$8.3m = \$30.3m	\$41m
\$8,000	—	No Construction	\$13.5m

2. The estimated prison construction and operating costs listed in this column reflect the costs associated with likely construction scenarios provided by the Kansas Department of Corrections.

3. The Sentencing Commission's prison bed impact for HB2142 currently assumes that program completion rates remain at current levels (27 percent of offenders complete 1 program prior to release, and 1 percent complete two programs prior to release).

Projected Kansas Prison Population

Fiscal Year 2007–2016



The Council of State Governments Justice Center is a national nonprofit organization that serves policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels from all branches of government. The Center provides practical, nonpartisan advice and consensus-driven strategies, informed by available evidence, to increase public safety and strengthen communities.

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