

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2025

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC, 20515

The Honorable Greg Meng
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC, 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Meng:

We write to thank you for your continued support for the Justice Reinvestment Initiative and to urge you to provide robust funding for the program in FY 2026. The subcommittee's support for the program has enabled states to develop innovative local programs and responses to improve public safety and reduce recidivism, while saving substantial taxpayer dollars.

Over the past two decades, states have grappled with rising crime and recidivism rates, an unprecedented surge in overdose deaths and addiction, growing demands on overstretched law enforcement agencies, and critical staffing shortages in jails and prisons. The Justice Reinvestment Initiative offers small grants to help states harness the power of data to confront these urgent challenges head-on. By analyzing trends in violent crime, substance use, and mental health disorders, as well as persistent recidivism, the initiative empowers states to implement evidence-based policies, invest in what works, and allocate resources effectively—ultimately reducing crime, addressing behavioral health needs, and enhancing public safety for all.

The small federal investment required to support the Justice Reinvestment Initiative is critical to helping states achieve these benefits. Many states have already used this program to implement innovative, evidence-based criminal justice policies after identifying the drivers of rising costs and crime. Here are some of the many tremendous results that the Justice Reinvestment Initiative has helped yield in recent years:

- In 2023, **Kentucky** became the first state to use the Justice Reinvestment Initiative to address criminal justice challenges related to domestic violence and intimate partner violence, which constitute a significant portion of violent crime in the state. Leaders from all three branches of government analyzed data from corrections, courts, law enforcement, and victim services to identify gaps and challenges. Policy recommendations aim to enhance victim services, strengthen responses to people who commit domestic violence, and reduce violent crime and recidivism. Kentucky's commitment to tackling domestic violence sets a potential national precedent, using data-

driven strategies to improve criminal justice responses, better support victims, and manage state corrections expenditures.

- **New York** has a long history of using the Justice Reinvestment model to examine and address complex system challenges. In 2011, New York City engaged in a local Justice Reinvestment effort to identify strategies to improve public safety outcomes. This led to recommendations to improve the early identification of individuals with behavioral health needs and streamline the treatment referral process, including through the creation of Court-Based Intervention Resource Teams (CIRT). State leaders are continuing work through the Justice Reinvestment Initiative to improve the collection and reporting of corrections data and ensure the state's investment in corrections is leading to better public safety outcomes.
- In 2023, **Arkansas** established a Recidivism Reduction Task Force, which aims to reduce recidivism and crime by improving community supervision and behavioral health resources. Over 15 months, state leaders analyzed crime, recidivism, and reentry data to develop policy recommendations. Final recommendations focused on investing in behavioral health, enhancing community supervision, and improving data collection to track outcomes, thereby fostering safer communities and managing corrections-related expenses through reduced recidivism. In 2013, Kansas first enacted Justice Reinvestment legislation that focused supervision resources on people at a high risk of reoffending and improved community-based responses to people with mental illnesses on probation. This initiative provided critical services to thousands under community supervision, improving public safety and reducing recidivism. Facing budget constraints and increasing corrections costs, Kansas enacted additional Justice Reinvestment legislation in 2021 and 2022 to further improve supervision practices, streamline the delivery of supervision, and enhance specialty court programs.
- In 2009, **Illinois's** Criminal Law Edit, Alignment, and Reform (CLEAR) Commission issued recommendations, based on its work through the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, to preserve public safety, reduce crime, and make the most effective use of correctional resources. Legislation passed in 2009 incorporated many of the commission's recommendations and led to the establishment of Adult Redeploy Illinois, a performance incentive funding program that directs resources to local agencies that work on the ground to reduce recidivism and crime.
- In **Iowa**, state leaders used a Justice Reinvestment Initiative approach in 2022 to analyze the impact of revocation-reduction practices on public safety and community-based corrections operations. The findings indicated that clients can be safely managed in the community while limiting revocation to people who pose a public safety risk. Iowa is using the results to further strengthen the state's community supervision system and ensure that officers have the necessary tools to effectively supervise individuals in the community.
- **Maryland** passed Justice Reinvestment legislation in 2017 to address recidivism and reduce crime by prioritizing prison beds for people convicted of violent offenses and expanding treatment for those struggling with substance use disorders. As part of the implementation of the 2017 legislation, Maryland invested in state and local services to

support victims as well as behavioral health treatment and reentry services; in FY 2024, the state awarded \$16.5 million in Performance Incentive Grant Funds (funded by costs averted by the legislation) throughout the state for these services. Between 2017 and 2023, Maryland experienced a 9 percent decrease in overall crime, a 15 percent decrease in violent crime, and a 7 percent decrease in property crime.

- **Minnesota** enacted legislation in 2023 to increase public safety and improve the effectiveness of community supervision statewide. The legislation created a new funding formula to ensure that all communities across the state receive stable funding for supervision that allows them to effectively target the underlying drivers of crime and recidivism specific to their local needs. As part of the new funding formula, Minnesota will increase its annual investment in community supervision by \$43.6 million while making other policy changes to develop statewide consistency in evidence-based supervision practices.
- **New Hampshire** has prioritized addressing the number of individuals with mental illnesses and substance use disorders who frequently cycle through county jails, prisons, and behavioral health systems, driving up incarceration costs and straining public health resources. In 2024, analysis conducted through Justice Reinvestment highlighted the significant reliance of this population on Medicaid for behavioral health services and their high rates of homelessness, lower-level offenses, and supervision violations, contributing to a 3-year incarceration cost of \$123 million. Guided by these findings, New Hampshire is strengthening public safety through targeted behavioral health and reentry responses, integrated care models, evidence-based training, and improved data collection.
- In **North Carolina**, a bipartisan group of state leaders passed comprehensive Justice Reinvestment legislation in 2011 that held people on supervision accountable, concentrated supervision resources on people at a high risk of reoffending, and required that every individual convicted of a felony who leaves prison receive supervision. Compared to 2011 trends, in 2021, North Carolina's probation revocations were more than 50 percent lower, total admissions to prison were 43 percent lower, and the state's corrections costs stabilized. Through analysis done in 2024, North Carolina learned that improvements made through Justice Reinvestment have sustained: Admissions to prison decreased 29 percent and the revocation rate decreased 56 percent, while the supervision population decreased 34 percent from 2012 to 2023.
- **Ohio** passed legislation in 2011 that included changes to sentencing to contain corrections spending and increase public safety. Ohio averted growth in its prisons by approximately 2,900 people and supported evidence-based changes to community supervision and expanded treatment resources to ensure that officers could focus their resources on individuals at a high risk of reoffending.
- Oklahoma has used the Justice Reinvestment Initiative on a number of occasions to examine and address pressing criminal justice challenges and ensure the continued use of cost-effective public safety strategies. In 2012, Justice Reinvestment analysis focused on crime and public safety resulted in legislation that established a new state-funded grant program to assist local law enforcement agencies in implementing data-driven strategies

to reduce violent crime. In 2017 and 2018, the state enacted Justice Reinvestment legislation that prioritizes prison space for people convicted of the most serious and violent offenses, while also strengthening community supervision to prevent repeated violations, and better supporting victims of crime. In 2023, Governor Kevin Stitt used Justice Reinvestment to examine data from jails across the state and identify drivers behind the prevalence of behavioral health needs among incarcerated individuals in the state. Oklahoma's continued commitment to ensuring the effective use of state resources without compromising public safety has led to positive public safety outcomes, including having one of the lowest recidivism rates in the country and seeing an overall 21 percent decrease in crime between 2019 and 2023.

- **Oregon's** Behavioral Health Justice Reinvestment Initiative addressed the high prevalence of individuals with mental illnesses and substance use disorders cycling through jails and emergency departments. In 2019, the state established a grant program to support community-based care, improving health and criminal justice outcomes while reducing costs. Oregon invested \$10.6 million in behavioral health services, curbing state corrections expenses by reducing jail admissions and court-ordered competency restorations. This initiative strengthens community supports, mitigates public safety impacts, and reduces recidivism.

Savings generated through the Justice Reinvestment Initiative process are reinvested in areas such as services for victims of crime; crisis intervention team training for local law enforcement; community-based treatment and reentry programs; and the most cost-effective, research-based strategies available for increasing public safety and strengthening communities.

Forty-four states have deployed a Justice Reinvestment approach to develop policies to reduce crime and recidivism and improve responses and treatment for people with addiction and mental illness. States that have used the Justice Reinvestment Initiative have seen an overall reduction of their crime rates of 38 percent on average between 2008 and 2023 and reduced their recidivism rates by 10 percent on average between 2008 and 2019.

Given the enormous successes that the Justice Reinvestment Initiative has helped deliver, we urge you to support robust funding for the program in FY 2026 so that more states can save taxpayer dollars and better protect the public by employing data-driven strategies to combat recidivism and hold people accountable.

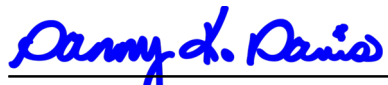
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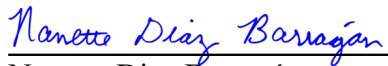
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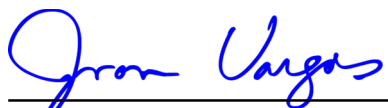
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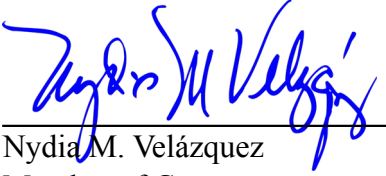
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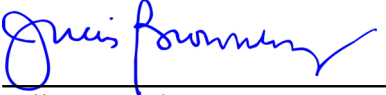
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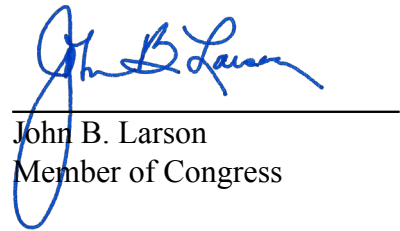
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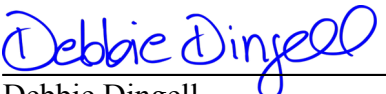
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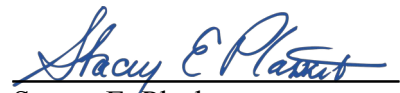
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