

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 13, 2026

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

The Honorable Grace 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 commitment to enhancing public safety through improving access to local crime and public health data for law enforcement and policymakers through the bipartisan Justice Reinvestment Initiative. **We urge your continued support for the Justice Reinvestment Initiative in the FY 2027 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.**

Over the past two decades, states have confronted simultaneous urgent crises, including rising crime, escalating addiction/overdose deaths, and strain on law enforcement, all worsened by correctional facility staffing shortages. The Justice Reinvestment Initiative offers small grants, using data to help states understand what in their community drives crime, recidivism, and ballooning corrections budgets. 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 ensuring a state's criminal justice system better serves the community. 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, on average, crime rates plummet by 38 percent, and recidivism rates drop by 10 percent.

Here are some of the many examples of how the Justice Reinvestment Initiative helped revitalize states' criminal justice systems to operate more efficiently and effectively:

- **Kentucky** has used the Justice Reinvestment Initiative several times to address key challenges, including a fast-growing prison population and the pervasive problem of domestic violence. The first effort in 2011 strengthened community corrections through risk and needs assessments, evidence-based practices, \$26 million for local correctional facilities, doubled corrections-based substance use treatment slots, and 1,400 new community treatment beds. The most recent engagement, launched in 2023, addressed domestic violence and intimate partner violence, which account for nearly half of all violent crime in the state and contribute significantly to recidivism, with more than a third of incarcerated individuals having a DV or IPV history. Findings and recommendations were presented to state leaders in December 2024, targeting three goals: equipping police, prosecutors, and judges to address violence more effectively; strengthening

supervision and expanding batterer intervention programming to reduce reoffending; and establishing a DV and IPV innovation grant to help courts improve data tracking and address rural-urban disparities. Kentucky leaders are now evaluating next steps.

- **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.
- **Kansas** has used the Justice Reinvestment Initiative multiple times to address persistent prison population growth and rising corrections costs. The first effort in 2007 expanded in-prison treatment and established program completion credits, resulting in a 17 percent drop in prison admissions for supervision violations and a 64 percent increase in community-based treatment investment. A second engagement in 2013 targeted the highest-risk individuals through behavioral health investments and progressive probation sanctions, producing an 800-person reduction in the prison population against projections and extending behavioral health services to 5,000 people on supervision. The most recent engagement, launched in 2020 amid budget shortfalls and continued prison population growth, produced legislation in 2021 and 2022 that diverted people convicted of drug offenses, established specialty courts, and consolidated supervision under a single agency, with ongoing data monitoring now being implemented to sustain those gains.
- **Maryland** used the Justice Reinvestment Initiative to address a corrections system that was consuming significant taxpayer resources without delivering proportionate public safety returns. In 2015, a high proportion of people admitted to prison were sentenced for nonviolent offenses, and 60 percent of the corrections budget went to correctional institutions while only 7 percent supported community supervision. Senate Bill 1005, signed into law in May 2016, expanded residential drug treatment and focused prison space and dollars on people who pose the greatest risk to public safety. These changes improved reentry practices, resulting in a 5 percent decrease in the prison population from 2016 to 2022 and reduced in treatment wait times from 167 days to approximately 10 days by 2019.
- 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.
- In 2009, **Illinois'** 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.

- **Texas** used the Justice Reinvestment Initiative to address a looming corrections crisis — in 2007, the state was projected to need 17,000 additional prison beds by 2012 at a cost of \$2 billion, probation revocations had climbed 18 percent over the prior decade, and more than 2,000 people were awaiting placement for substance use and mental health treatment. Policy changes expanded treatment capacity by 5,200 program slots in prisons and added 4,500 diversion beds for people on probation and parole with technical violations. As a result, Texas averted more than \$1.6 billion in prison construction and operating costs, closed 16 prisons, reduced its prison population by more than 30,000 people, and brought crime rates to near historic lows.
- **Alabama** used the Justice Reinvestment Initiative to confront a severe prison overcrowding crisis — in 2015, the state had the most crowded prison system in the nation, operating at 195 percent of capacity, while probation and parole caseloads averaged nearly 200 cases per officer, leaving high-risk individuals without adequate supervision or treatment. As a result of Justice Reinvestment Initiative legislation, Alabama prioritized prison space for people convicted of violent offenses, strengthened community-based supervision and treatment, and ensured supervision for every person released from prison. Implementation included hiring more than 100 new probation and parole officers, opening three day-reporting centers, deferring the lowest-level drug and property offenders to intensive community supervision, and expanding access to substance use and mental health treatment. These changes helped reduce Alabama's prison population by 27 percent between 2015 and 2021.
- **West Virginia** has used the Justice Reinvestment Initiative to address the persistent challenge of substance use driving incarceration. Legislation in 2013 improved treatment access and accountability, reducing revocations and easing the financial burden on the state's prison system. In 2025, facing a growing and costly jail population, state leaders again engaged the Justice Reinvestment Initiative to analyze pretrial and sentenced population trends, consult with judges, law enforcement, and behavioral health experts, and develop practical solutions to the substance use and mental health issues that drive jail incarceration and costs.
- **Pennsylvania** used the Justice Reinvestment Initiative multiple times to address persistent prison population growth and rising corrections costs that strained the state budget. Despite a declining prison population, the state still had the highest incarceration rate in the Northeast in 2015, with nearly one-third of prison beds occupied by people who violated probation or parole conditions. Early Justice Reinvestment Initiative efforts produced legislation expanding recidivism-reduction programs and establishing a framework to reinvest corrections savings. A third engagement in 2019 eliminated delays in releasing people with short sentences and streamlined access to drug treatment, along with a shift to performance-based contracts for community corrections providers that reduced recidivism among participants by 11 percent.
- In 2011, **Indiana** used the Justice Reinvestment Initiative to get ahead of a projected 21 percent prison population increase that would have cost approximately \$1.2 billion in construction and operating costs by 2017. The resulting policy framework focused on strengthening community

supervision and expanding substance use treatment. Further, the General Assembly appropriated \$55 million in grant funding during 2016 and 2017 for technology-based programs and substance use and mental health treatment.

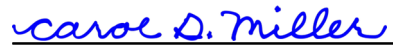
Taxpayer savings generated through the Justice Reinvestment Initiative process are reinvested in areas such as services for victims of crime; crisis intervention team training for local law enforcement; community-based treatment and reentry programs; and the most cost-effective, research-based strategies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

Justice Reinvestment Initiative enables states to both strategically maximize their criminal justice budget and implement evidence-based, tailored strategies to combat recidivism and hold people accountable. As elected officials, our responsibility is to ensure our constituents' safety, and the Justice Reinvestment Initiative has proven to make our communities stronger and safer. We urge you to support continued funding for the program in FY 2027.

Sincerely,



Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



Carol D. Miller
Member of Congress



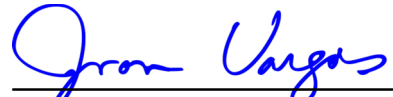
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



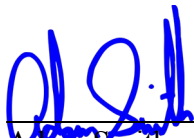
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



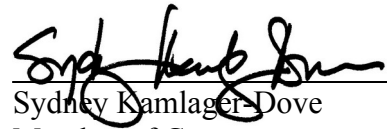
Adam Smith
Member of Congress



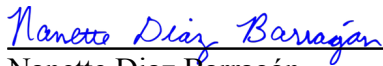
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress




Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



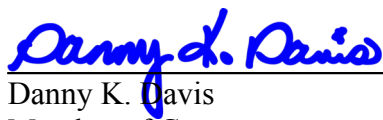
Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



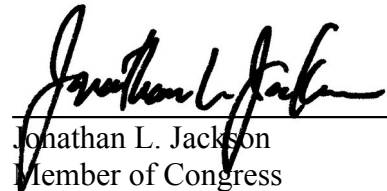
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



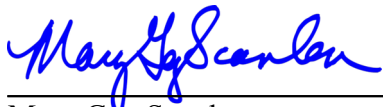
Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



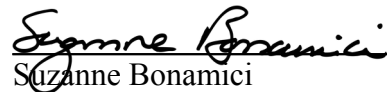
Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



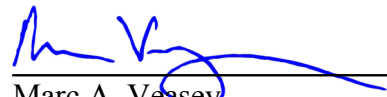
Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



Wesley Bell
Member of Congress



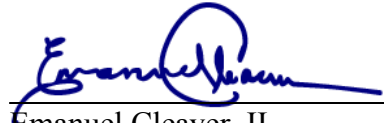
Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress



Sarah McBride
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



David Scott
Member of Congress



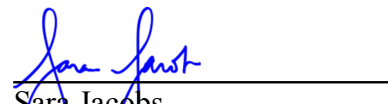
Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



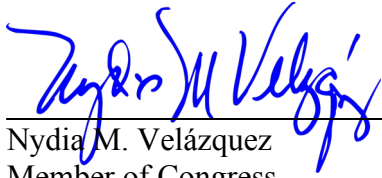
Gabe Amo
Member of Congress



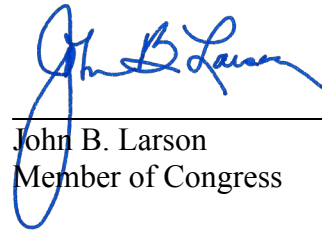
Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



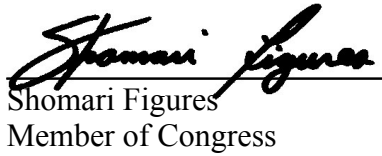
Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



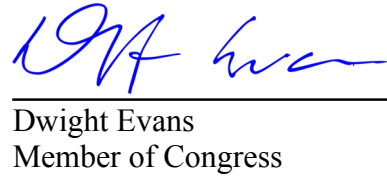
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



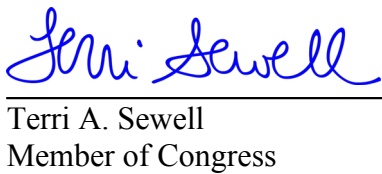
John B. Larson
Member of Congress



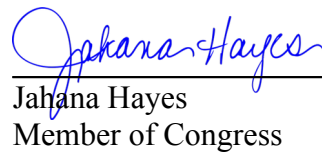
Shomari Figures
Member of Congress



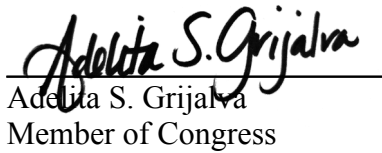
Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



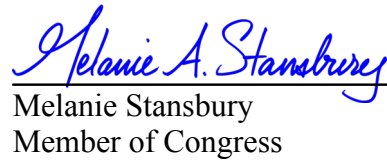
Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



Adelita S. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress

