



An Opportunity for Responsible Criminal Justice Reform

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Earlier this year, I wrote about the need for broader [criminal justice reform](#) in order to avoid spending nearly half a billion dollars on two new prisons over the next five years. [Legislation](#) has been introduced that would adopt the [recommendations](#) from the Justice Reinvestment Task Force that could help Missouri avoid taking on this large expense.

One major component of these reforms would be to increase the number of community treatment centers for substance abuse and mental health. Currently, 35 percent of admissions are for in-prison treatment because no alternative exists in the offenders' community. Unfortunately, the task force found that Missouri's in-prison treatment programs are ineffective, thus wasting taxpayers' dollars. Establishing more community-based treatment programs could produce much better outcomes and be a better use of the state's resources.

The proposed legislation would also assist law enforcement in combatting violent crime, increase access to victim compensation, and adopt better practices throughout the Department of Corrections to reduce recidivism. Given that Missouri's prisons are already over capacity, pursuing these reforms would be a step in the right direction.

Tags:

- [Criminal Justice Reform](#)

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