



Arizona: The Case for Time Served Reform (HB 2270, Blackman)

Snapshot of Arizona:

- With nearly 42,000 people incarcerated, Arizona's prison capacity is at 95 percentⁱ
- The state spends over \$1 billion dollar each year on correctionsⁱⁱ
- The number of people entering prison for nonviolent crimes is growing fast. In fiscal year 2017, 70 percent of all prison admissions were for nonviolent crimes.ⁱⁱⁱ

Arizona's sentencing laws lead to long sentences for the wrong people:

- Arizona law requires all prisoners to serve 85 percent of their sentences, even if they:
 - Committed nonviolent offenses
 - Pose no threat to public safety
 - Played minor roles in their offense, or
 - Have been rehabilitated.
- Arizona law locks up large numbers of low-level drug offenders who fill prison cells that should be reserved for high-risk offenders.
- Arizona prisoners stay in prison 25 to 100 percent longer than the national average. Drug offenders in particular serve prison terms that are 40 percent longer than the national average.^{iv}

Long sentences increases prison populations and costs but don't make Arizonans safer:

- Long prison sentences for low-level offenses do not protect the public. Research shows that high rates of incarceration of drug offenders does not reduce drug use, overdose deaths, or arrests.^v
- Research finds no connection between long prison sentences and lower recidivism rates.
- A study of Michigan, Maryland, and Florida found that long prison terms did not prevent crime or stop offenders from committing crimes after being released.^{vi}

Other states have reformed sentencing laws and increased public safety:

- Mississippi reduced its time-served requirements for nonviolent offenders in 2014 and made the change retroactive in 2018. By 2017, the state had saved \$266 million and experienced a 5 percent drop in its crime rate.^{vii}
- In 2017, Louisiana lawmakers reduced time-served requirements for nonviolent offenders and granted them parole eligibility after serving 25 percent of their sentences.^{viii} Louisiana's prison population has since declined to a 20-year low, and savings of \$1.7 million have been reinvested in victims' services.^{ix}

ⁱ Arizona Department of Corrections, "[Corrections at a Glance December 2018.](#)"

ⁱⁱ [Arizona Department of Corrections FY 2019 Appropriations Report.](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ FWD.us, "[Arizona's Imprisonment Crisis: The High Price of Prison Growth.](#)" September, 2018.

^{iv} FWD.us, "[Arizona's Imprisonment Crisis: The High Price of Prison Growth.](#)" September, 2018.

^v Pew Charitable Trusts, "[More Imprisonment Does Not Reduce State Drug Problems.](#)" March 2018.



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- ^{vi} Pew Charitable Trusts, "[Prison Time Served and Recidivism](#)," October 3, 2013.
- ^{vii} Pew Charitable Trusts, "[Mississippi Enacts Round 2 of Criminal Justice Reform](#)," May 2018.
- ^{viii} Pew Charitable Trusts, "[Louisiana's 2017 Criminal Justice Reforms](#)," March 2018.
- ^{ix} The Louisiana Weekly, "[State's Prison Population Shrinks](#)," Oct. 22, 2018.