

## **Gov Christie Puts Forward Criminal Justice Reform Plan**

*Plan Focuses on Keeping Communities Safe While Helping Non-Violent Offenders Reclaim Their Lives*

---

### **CAMDEN AS NATIONAL MODEL FOR COMMUNITY POLICING**

Effective law enforcement requires a police force that is engaged in their community and has the necessary resources and support. In Camden, New Jersey – long one of the most violent cities in America – Governor Christie joined a coalition of county and community leaders that brought about a fundamental restructuring of the city’s police force and a rethinking of their engagement with those they serve.

Governor Christie is calling for Camden to serve as a national model for how law enforcement and communities can build trust while also keep people safe.

- Focus On Community Outreach: City and police officials must emphasize outreach to community leaders and one-on-one interactions between officers and residents as a cornerstone to ingraining the police force within the neighborhoods they patrol and make the people partners in the effort to curb violence.
- Put Officers Right On The Streets: Through reorganization, communities can break through political intransigence to focus more resources on increasing the size of the force. In Camden, the old inefficient city force was disbanded, and a county-wide force was created in its place bringing nearly twice as many officers to the force at the same cost to taxpayers. Additionally, desk jobs can be transitioned to civilian personnel so that more officers are walking the beat.
- Invest in Cutting Edge Crime-Fighting Technology: New technology can be utilized to ensure that officers can be aware of and respond to incidents swiftly and effectively. In Camden’s Real-Time Crime Center, the new force can monitor over 120 citywide cameras and 35 microphones which can instantly pinpoint the exact location of a gunshot.

#### **“Camden Turns Around With New Police Force”**

*- The New York Times*

In Camden, residents have begun to see the benefits of these types of reforms with major reductions in violent crime:

- o 22 Percent Overall Drop In Violent Crime;
- o 51 Percent Reduction In Homicides;
- o 30 Percent Reduction In Rape;
- o 30 Percent Drop In Robberies; and  
15 Percent Reduction In Aggravated Assaults.

### **RESTORE FAIRNESS AND COMMON SENSE TO THE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

#### **Focus on Treatment First with Expansion of Drug Courts:**

Governor Christie has championed the use of drug courts in the state of New Jersey, which allow first time, non-violent offenders, the opportunity to get the treatment they need rather than

serving jail time. The Governor expanded mandatory drug court for first time non-violent drug offenders across the state, and is calling for the expansion drug courts to every state.

- The rate at which drug court graduates are re-arrested for new offenses is 16% and the reconviction rate is 8%. This is compared to re-arrest rates for drug offenders released from prison, which stand at 54% with a re-conviction rate of 43%.
- An average institutional cost per inmate is approximately \$38,900, whereas the cost for an active drug court participant is roughly \$11,379.

Governor Christie also called for ending the current dysfunctional, ad-hoc approach for implementing drug courts being used on the federal level.

- As President, Christie would make drug court mandatory in all 94 federal districts. He will implement a system to review and analyze outcomes of the various drug court models and institute best practices guidance for federal judges and prosecutors.

### **Common-Sense Bail Reform:**

It is fundamentally unfair that in some cases individuals charged with minor, non-violent offenses can be held in jail while awaiting trial simply because they cannot afford bail, while dangerous and violent offenders can be back out on the streets because they can.

In New Jersey, Governor Christie took action to address this injustice, and the reforms he signed into law should be a model for every state:

- Bail should be issued based on an assessment of risk, and judges should be able to deny release to those with violent records or who pose a threat to their communities.
- Individuals who commit non-violent, minor offenses should have access to non-monetary bail options – giving them a chance to reclaim their lives.

## **HELPING EX-OFFENDERS RECLAIM THEIR LIVES**

### **New Jersey's One-Stop Model As National Model For Ex-Offenders Reentering Society:**

Governor Christie is calling for an expansion of the one-stop model to help ex-offenders access critical services and support that creates stability and consistency. By connecting ex-offenders directly to coordinated services as they leave prison, we can strengthen their reintegration into the community as well as reduce long-term service costs to taxpayers.

- In New Jersey, a single physical location in each participating city was established to provide access to the services proven most critical to help ex-offenders move forward from addition, find stability and re-enter their communities:
  - Addiction Treatment
  - Housing
  - Employment Services

### **Increase Education and Job Training Opportunities for Inmates:**

Educational and training opportunities for inmates should be expanded so that upon release ex-offenders will have acquired the skills they need to find stable employment. Re-entering the workforce is a critical step for ex-offenders to reintegrate into their communities and lead productive lives.

- Use New Jersey Scholarship and Transformative Education in Prisons Consortium as model for increasing access to higher education opportunities.
  - NJ-STEP is a consortium of public and private universities that are providing access to college for qualified incarcerated students, while assisting in the transition to college life upon their release.
  - Currently, there are nearly 500 inmates participating in the program, in 6 of New Jersey's 13 State correctional facilities, with the aim of expanding over the next four years to serve 2,000 inmates in 10 facilities.

### **Ban The Box:**

One of the biggest challenges facing ex-offenders as they seek to re-enter society is finding and maintaining stable employment. One key step we can take to help these individuals find jobs is to require employers to first interview job applicants before asking if he or she has ever been convicted of a crime. Known as "Ban The Box," this reform asks employers to give ex-offenders a fair chance by removing questions about prior criminal records from initial job applications.

- Governor Christie has signed this type of legislation in New Jersey, and he will pursue similar reform across the country.