



John Howard Association of Illinois

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JOHN HOWARD ASSOCIATION STATEMENT ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM LEGISLATION

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The John Howard Association (JHA) is thrilled with yesterday's announcement by Governor Rauner and members of the General Assembly about the bipartisan legislation that has been introduced that will advance reform of Illinois' criminal justice system. JHA applauds these efforts and looks forward to continued policy, legislation and executive action to reduce Illinois' reliance on incarceration, improve available programming and treatment inside of our prisons in order to increase offender success upon reentry into society, and provide vital support to released offenders in order to increase public safety and reduce recidivism.

For several years JHA has championed procurement of State Identification cards (State ID) for all juveniles and adults leaving state custody. Recognizing that a State ID card is needed to apply for a job, secure housing, and to receive treatment and medical care, successful reentry is not possible without an individual having state identification. Frequently the steps for getting an ID, obtaining the underlying documents (birth certificate and social security card), fees, and transportation to a Department of Motor Vehicles office pose insurmountable barriers for people leaving prison. SB 3368, sponsored by Sen. Karen McConaughay and Rep. John Cabello, requires the Secretary of State and the Illinois Department of Corrections to work together to provide state identification to offenders upon release in order to assist in their successful transition into society.

Making it mandatory for a judge to review a pre-sentencing report, and explain on the record why incarceration is appropriate for offenders with no prior sentence of probation or convictions leading to imprisonment is an important sentencing reform that will reduce our incarcerated population and divert people to appropriate services. SB 3164 will stem the tide of low level offenders into prison, redirect them to more appropriate sanctions, and reduce recidivism by not exposing low level offenders to more criminogenic factors and individuals inside our prisons. This legislation is sponsored by Sen. Michael Connelly and Rep. Brian Stewart.

SB 3294 expands the use of electronic monitoring by the Illinois Department of Corrections so resources are more effectively directed towards supporting individuals' transition back into communities, and on supervision and programming that will lead to increased public safety and reduce recidivism. This legislation is sponsored by Sen. Kwame Raoul and Rep. Elgie Sims.

State Sen. Kwame Raoul (D-Chicago) said in a press release about the legislation, that "[t]he legislative package we are putting on the table today is another encouraging step forward, but there is much work left to be done, and these collaborative efforts must continue." JHA supports this commitment to reform, and echoes this sentiment that there is work left to be done and bipartisan collaboration is the key to these important changes being implemented.

JHA looks forward to continued reform efforts that will reduce Illinois' reliance on incarceration and improve outcomes for those caught in our criminal justice system, the communities they return to, and all of the citizens of our state.