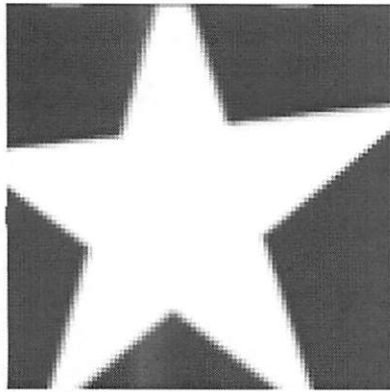


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The conservative approach to criminal justice:
 fighting crime, supporting victims, and protecting taxpayers.

a project of the TEXAS PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION, in partnership with the AMERICAN CONSERVATIVE UNION FOUNDATION and JUSTICE FELLOWSHIP

Statement of Principles

A crucial part of the Right on Crime initiative is our Statement of Principles on conservative criminal justice reform, signed by over 70 of the most influential figures in the conservative movement.

As members of the nation's conservative movement, we strongly support constitutionally limited government, transparency, individual liberty, personal responsibility, and free enterprise. We believe public safety is a core responsibility of government because the establishment of a well-functioning criminal justice system enforces order and respect for every person's right to property and life, and ensures that liberty does not lead to license.

Conservatives correctly insist that government services be evaluated on whether they produce the best possible results at the lowest possible cost, but too often this lens of accountability has not focused as much on public safety policies as other areas of government. As such, corrections spending has expanded to become the second fastest growing area of state budgets—trailing only Medicaid.

Conservatives are known for being tough on crime, but we must also be tough on criminal justice spending. That means demanding more cost-effective approaches that enhance public safety. A clear example is our reliance on prisons, which serve a critical role by incapacitating dangerous offenders and career criminals but are not the solution for every type of offender. And in some instances, they have the unintended consequence of hardening nonviolent, low-risk offenders—making them a greater risk to the public than when they entered.

Applying the following conservative principles to criminal justice policy is vital to achieving a cost-effective system that protects citizens, restores victims, and reforms wrongdoers.

1. As with any government program, the criminal justice system must be transparent and include performance measures that hold it accountable for its results in protecting the public, lowering crime rates, reducing re-offending, collecting victim restitution and conserving taxpayers' money.
2. Crime victims, along with the public and taxpayers, are among the key "consumers" of the criminal justice system; the victim's conception of justice, public safety, and the offender's risk for future criminal conduct should be prioritized when determining an appropriate punishment.
3. The corrections system should emphasize public safety, personal responsibility, work, restitution, community service, and treatment—both in probation and parole, which supervise most offenders, and in prisons.
4. An ideal criminal justice system works to reform amenable offenders who will return to society through harnessing the power of families, charities, faith-based groups, and communities.
5. Because incentives affect human behavior, policies for both offenders and the corrections system must align incentives with our goals of public safety, victim restitution and satisfaction, and cost-effectiveness, thereby moving from a system that grows when it fails to one that rewards results.
6. Criminal law should be reserved for conduct that is either blameworthy or threatens public safety, not wielded to grow government and undermine economic freedom.
7. These principles are grounded in time-tested conservative truths—constitutionally limited government, transparency, individual liberty, personal responsibility, free enterprise, and the centrality of the family and community. All of these are critical to addressing today's criminal justice challenges. It is time to apply these principles to the task of delivering a better return on taxpayers' investments in public safety. Our security, prosperity, and freedom depend on it.

.....

National Signatories

Chuck Colson(1931–2012),Prison Fellowship Ministries

William J. Bennett,Former U.S. Secretary of Education and Federal"Drug Czar"

Rick Perry, Former Governor of Texas

Jeb Bush, Former Governor of Florida

Ken Cuccinelli,Former Attorney General of Virginia

Newt Gingrich, Former Speaker of the House of Representatives;American Solutions for Winning the Future

Asa Hutchinson,Former U.S. Attorney and Administrator of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration

David Keene,Former Chairman of theAmerican Conservative Union

Edwin Meese, III,Former U.S. Attorney General

Stephen Moore,The Heritage Foundation

Pat Nolan,Director of the Criminal Justice Reform Project at the American Conservative Union Foundation

Grover Norquist,Americans for Tax Reform

Richard Viguerie, ConservativeHQ.com

J.C. Watts, Former Member of the U.S. House of Representatives for Oklahoma's 4th Congressional District

Brooke Rollins, Texas Public Policy Foundation

Ken Blackwell, Former Ohio Secretary of State

Ralph Reed, Founder of the Faith and Freedom Coalition

Eli Lehrer, R Street Institute

Robert Ehrlich, Former Maryland Governor

Luis Fortuño, Former Puerto Rico Governor

Rebecca Hagelin, Executive Committee of the Council for National Policy

Larry Thompson, Former U.S. Deputy Attorney General

Tony Perkins, Family Research Council

Penny Nance, Concerned Women for America

John J. DiIulio, Jr., University of Pennsylvania

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George Kelling, Manhattan Institute

Gary L. Bauer, Former President of the Family Research Council

Michael Reagan, The Reagan Legacy Foundation

Monica Crowley, Ph.D., Fox News political analyst

Erick Erickson, Red State

Viet Dinh, Georgetown University Law Center and former U.S. Assistant Attorney General

Rabbi Daniel Lapin, American Alliance of Jews and Christians

Bishop Harry Jackson, Hope Christian Church

Lisa B. Nelson, American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC)

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Michael Carnuccio, Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs

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John Hood, John Locke Foundation (NC)

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Richard E. Doran, Former Florida Attorney General
Mark Earley, Former Virginia Attorney General
Jim Petro, Former Ohio Attorney General
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Kris Steele, Former Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives
Allan Bense, Former Speaker of the Florida House
Kelly McCutchen, Georgia Public Policy Foundation
Donna Arduin, Arduin, Laffer & Moore
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Bob Williams, State Budget Solutions
J. Robert McClure, III, James Madison Institute(FL)
Paul Gessing, Rio Grande Foundation(NM)
Craig DeRoche, President, Justice Fellowship, Former Speaker of the Michigan House of Representatives
Connor Boyack, President, Libertas Institute
Kevin Holtsberry, Buckeye Institute for Public Policy Solutions(OH)
Joe Whitley, Former Acting U.S. Associate Attorney General and U.S. Attorney
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