

# Mass Encarceration: What You Can Do Now

## Things we can do up front...

- Raise awareness among friends and relatives.
- Advocate for an end to STOP & FRISK everywhere.
- Advocate for police to be stationed OUTSIDE of schools, especially in the inner city.
- Vote to fund improved education for the inner city.
- Serve as tutors / mentors for at risk boys of color.
- Become involved with New Haven Re-Entry Roundtable.
- Advocate for Justice RE-INVESTMENT.
- Call your Congressmen and Senators – State and Federal – to let them know that you don't want them to be TOUGH ON CRIME but rather SMART ON CRIME.

A recent study looked at reforms across the United States aimed at reducing America's correctional population. It published a set of recommendations that, if followed, were predicted to reduce prison, parole and probation populations in half within a five to seven-year window. Nine recommendations were advocated, the first four of which were stated to be capable of dropping state prison populations in half. Those four are as follows:

- (1) reduce the length of stay for sentenced prisoners;
- (2) divert technical parole violators (e.g., persons who miss appointments with their parole officers, fail drug tests or violate technical conditions of parole as opposed to those who commit new crimes) from prison and reduce their length of stay;
- (3) divert technical probation violators from prison and reduce their length of stay;
- (4) divert persons convicted of victimless crimes from prison. The study assumed 25% of the current stream of drug and public disorder prisoners could be diverted to probation in lieu of prison. The study also assumed the number of technical parole violations could be slashed by 80% and the remaining 20% could receive a short period of imprisonment not to exceed 90 days. The five remaining set of recommended reforms were:
  - (5) reduce the length of stay for persons placed on probation;
  - (6) reduce the length of stay for persons placed on parole;
  - (7) reduce probation revocation rates;
  - (8) reduce parole revocation rates;
  - (9) make greater use of fines, restitution, and community service in lieu of probation.

Austin, J., "Reducing America's Correctional Populations: A Strategic Plan." Justice Research and Policy, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2010, at 9-40.

## Things we can do during and after prison...

- Add your church's name to the list of churches who will welcome those coming out of prison.
- Sponsor community events for the formerly incarcerated and their families.
- Hire the formerly incarcerated.
- Serve as a mentor for inmates for their last 6 months of incarceration.
- Provide workshops for recently released to help with resettlement post incarceration.
- Become a prayer partner for an inmate.
- Invite Phoenix Association to come speak at your church

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## Things we can do during and after prison...

Organizations you might get involved with or support

- [Faith Behind Bars and Beyond](#)
- [Project MORE](#)
- [Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance](#)

## Read More About It

- White Paper – Ending Mass Incarceration: Charting a New Justice Reinvestment  
[http://sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/sen\\_Charting%20a%20New%20Justice%20Reinvestment.pdf](http://sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/sen_Charting%20a%20New%20Justice%20Reinvestment.pdf)
- BOOKS
  - *The New Jim Crow* by Dr. Michelle Alexander, Law Professor at the Ohio State University
  - *Invisible Men: Mass Incarceration and the Myth of Black Progress* by Dr. Becky Pettit, University of Washington Sociologist
  - *Invisible Punishment: The Collateral Consequences of Mass Incarceration*, edited by Marc Mauer and Meda Chesney-Lind
  - *The Trouble with Black Boys . . . and other reflections on Race, Equity, and the Future of Public Education* by Dr. Pedro A. Noguera, NYU

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[http://morehousemaleinitiative.com/?page\\_id=178](http://morehousemaleinitiative.com/?page_id=178)
- Wilson, E. O., "What's Your Tribe," in *Newsweek* (4/9/2012)
- Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Prison Inmates at Midyear 2008 – Statistical Tables, March 2009 (Revised 4/8/09), Table 18*