

The full report can be accessed at <http://www.justicereinvestment.org/summit/report>.

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For Immediate Release

**CONGRESSMAN WOLF ANNOUNCES NEW REPORT ON BIPARTISAN APPROACHES TO
REDUCING CRIME, RECIDIVISM AND CORRECTIONS COSTS**

Washington, D.C.— Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA) was joined by Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) today to highlight the challenges facing the nation’s corrections and criminal justice system and to unveil a new report from the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center offering proven strategies to increase public safety, reduce recidivism and save taxpayer dollars.

As states are forced to bring spending in line with revenue, spending on corrections— one of the fastest growing line items in state budgets, totaling more than \$50 billion annually—is also being scaled back. Many have cautioned that these fiscal pressures could spur haphazard policy decisions that negatively impact public safety.

“Quick fixes can have dangerous consequences,” Chairman Wolf warned. “To increase public safety in this austere budget environment, we must support cost-effective efforts by states that are grounded in the ‘best practices’ and draw on the latest innovations from public corrections and the faith-based community.”

The report released today highlights such innovation and research, focusing on four fundamental strategies for developing cost-effective corrections policies that can reduce recidivism:

1. Focus resources on individuals most likely to reoffend
2. Base programs on research and ensure quality
3. Implement effective community supervision policies and practices
4. Apply place-based strategies

The report is based on a 2010 summit requested by the U.S. House Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Subcommittee to bring together the nation’s leading corrections and criminal justice experts, researchers and practitioners. The summit was convened by the CSG Justice Center in partnership with the Public Safety Performance Project of The Pew Center on the States; the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice; and the Public Welfare Foundation.

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“For many years, reducing recidivism seemed nearly impossible. Now, many states are starting to turn a corner through commonsense and cost-effective reforms. We need to see more states tailor the kind of smart strategies that the jurisdictions profiled in this report have implemented,” said Wolf.

To determine how to apply these strategies to their criminal justice system, several states have used a justice reinvestment approach. Such an approach involves working across party lines, conducting exhaustive analyses of state and local data, developing strategies to reduce corrections spending and reinvesting some of those savings in efforts that can increase public safety, and then monitor their efforts.

“As states look for ways to reduce budgets, this report can provide a blueprint on how to implement corrections strategies in a more efficient and productive way,” said Senator Whitehouse, who plans to introduce legislation this year to create justice reinvestment grants for state and county governments. “Following this blueprint will help protect public safety and reduce costs.”

Senator Cornyn said, “These strategies helped my home state of Texas save nearly a quarter of a billion dollars and identify and improve existing treatment, mental health and diversion programs that led to significant reductions in probationers’ and parolees’ being returned to prison,” said Senator Cornyn. “This report tells the story of other states that, like Texas, have been able to reduce crime and save money. This is the roadmap to the better outcomes that we’ve been seeking.”

Around the country, policymakers have been calling for innovative approaches in corrections, including many conservative leaders. Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich recognized the approach as commonsense: “It’s time to end business as usual in our prison system and for legislators to think and act with courage and creativity. We can make sensible and proven reforms to our criminal justice system—policies that will cut prison costs while keeping the public safe.”

State Rep. Pat Colloton (R-KS), who is vice-chair of the CSG Justice Center Board of Directors, observed, “Funding made available by Congress has enabled state and local governments across the country to innovate and test different programs and policies that make our communities safer and save money. Today, the CSG Justice Center releases a report that distills the lessons learned from these innovations into strategies that can be adopted everywhere.”

The [CSG Justice Center’s Justice Reinvestment Initiative](#) to address corrections spending and public safety is a partnership with the [Public Safety Performance Project of The Pew Center on the States](#) and the [Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice](#). These efforts have provided similar data-driven analyses and policy options to leaders in 14 states.

The Council of State Governments Justice Center is a national nonprofit organization that serves policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels from all branches of government. The Justice Center provides practical, nonpartisan advice and consensus-driven strategies—informed by available evidence—to increase public safety and strengthen communities.

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