Principles of Effective State Sentencing and Corrections Policy

A Report of the NCSL Sentencing and Corrections Work Group

Presented
August 9, 2011
NCSL Legislative Summit
San Antonio, Texas
NCSL Sentencing and Corrections Work Group

- 18 Legislators, bipartisan and geographically diverse
- Discuss and identify overarching principles for effective state sentencing and corrections policy
- In partnership with the Public Safety Performance Project of the Pew Center on the States
Principles of Effective State Sentencing and Corrections Policy

Includes:

- Seven principles;
- Corresponding points that serve as action items for Legislatures;
- Topical chapters that discuss and provide examples of the principles at work; and
- Glossary and resources.

Themes:

- Policies can both reduce recidivism and provide cost savings;
- Benefit from interbranch and intergovernmental cooperation;
- Use of data and evaluation.
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Principle 1

• Embody fairness, consistency, proportionality and opportunity

Example: Drug Sentencing and Diversion
Principle 2

- Articulate clear and purposeful rationale
- Related policies should be logical, understandable and transparent

Example: Success is defined as recidivism reduction
Principle 3

• Make available a continuum of options, including prison space and community programs

Example: Supervision tailored based on risk; prison space ensured for dangerous offenders
Principle 4

• Policies should be resource-sensitive; costs and benefits should be measurable

Example: Incentive Funding
Principle 5

- Justice information is a foundation

Example: Justice Reinvestment
Principle 6

- Policies should reflect current circumstances and needs

Example: Theft thresholds
Principle 7

• Include strategies to reduce crime and victimization; tap federal, academic and private resources

Example: Prevention programs and reentry initiatives
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For questions and more information, contact:


• NCSL at www.ncsl.org, 303/364-7700 or cj-info@ncsl.org

• Public Safety Performance Project at www.pewcenteronthestates.org/publicsafety
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