



# LOUISIANANS FOR PRISON ALTERNATIVES

## SUPPORT SB 269 (CARTER)

# Extend Second Chances to People Who Have Paid Their Debts to Society

In 2017, the Louisiana Legislature passed a number of criminal justice reforms aimed at reducing the prison population, preventing crime, and saving taxpayer dollars. Despite being data-driven and supported by research, not all reforms recommended by the Justice Reinvestment Task Force (Task Force) became law. These proposals, which were crafted with the input of crime survivors, district attorneys, judges, Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, and law enforcement, would have safely reduced our prison population and saved taxpayers' money.

It is time to finish implementing the Task Force recommendations, and to change laws that prevent many Louisianans from being able to demonstrate rehabilitation and from being reunited with their families and communities. Louisiana can both hold people accountable for their actions and offer opportunities for redemption.

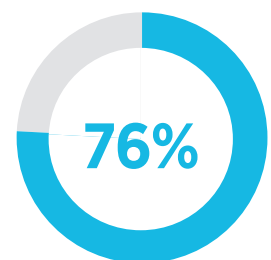
## THE PROBLEM

### Taxpayers foot the bill for increased costs as incarcerated people grow older.

- Fourteen percent of Louisiana's prison population – nearly 4,900 people – are serving life sentences without the possibility of parole.<sup>1</sup>
- Seventy-six (76) percent of the people incarcerated at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola will die there.
- The longer people stay in prison and the older they get, the more it costs the state and taxpayers to house and treat them. Prisons must provide health care to incarcerated individuals, ranging from blood pressure medicine, to dialysis and insulin, to cancer treatments.
- The cost of medications and specialty care alone can top \$100,000 for some incarcerated people.

### People in Louisiana spend excessive time in prison with no positive impact on public safety.

- Research shows that people routinely age out of crime.<sup>2</sup>
- Approximately a third of those serving life sentences were younger than 25 when they were convicted.<sup>3</sup>
- Longer sentences have not been proven to prevent crime. Furthermore, long prison terms



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are not more effective than shorter prison terms at reducing the likelihood that people will reoffend.<sup>4</sup>

### Louisiana's sentencing laws are harsher than those of other states.

- Louisiana is one of only six states where adults who have received life sentences are never eligible for parole.<sup>5</sup> This means that any time a person is sentenced to life imprisonment in Louisiana, that individual will die in prison.
- Louisiana and Mississippi are the only two states that mandate life sentences without parole for people charged with second-degree murder.<sup>6</sup>
- In Texas, second-degree murder carries a sentence of five to 99 years, with parole eligibility after 30 years.<sup>7</sup> In Arkansas, sentencing for that offense ranges from 10 to 40 years.<sup>8</sup>
- There are nearly 4,900 people serving life without parole in Louisiana. That's more than the number of people serving life without parole in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee and Texas – combined.<sup>9</sup>

## THE SOLUTION

### Support SB 269 (Carter)

- Extends parole eligibility to people serving life sentences who have served 30 years and have reached the age of 50.
- Expands parole eligibility to people sentenced to long terms in prison who have served 20 years and have reached the age of 45.

*Louisianans for Prison Alternatives (LPA) is a diverse statewide coalition of organizations committed to reducing Louisiana's imprisonment rate. LPA sees an urgent need for the Louisiana State Legislature to pass comprehensive criminal justice reform legislation to make our system more just, accountable and transparent to all Louisianans.*



**Louisiana**  
Second-degree murder carries a life sentence with no parole.



**TEXAS**  
Second-degree murder carries a sentence of 5 to 99 yrs, with parole eligibility after 30 yrs.



**ARKANSAS**  
Second-degree murder carries a sentence of 10 to 40 yrs.

1 Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, Briefing Book, April 2017, pg. 28.

2 See David Farrington, *Age and Crime* (1986); Daniel Nagin and Kenneth Land, *Age, Criminal Careers, and Population Heterogeneity* (1993), available at <https://www.nij.gov/topics/crime/Pages/delinquency-to-adult-offending.aspx#note2> (last visited Feb. 7, 2018).

3 Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, Briefing Book, April 2017, pg. 38.

4 Daniel Nagin, Francis Cullen, and Cheryl Lero Jonson, *Imprisonment and Reoffending* (2009); Paul Gendreau, Claire Goggin, and Francis Cullen, *The Effects of Prison Sentences on Recidivism* (1999); United States Sentencing Commission, *Recidivism Among Offenders Receiving Retroactive Sentence Reductions: The 2007 Crack Cocaine Amendment* (2014); Benjamin Meade, Benjamin Steiner, Matthew Makarios, and Lawrence Travis, *Estimating a Dose-Response Relationship Between Time Served in Prison and Recidivism* (2012).

5 *Families Against Mandatory Minimums, Louisiana*, available at <http://fam.org/states-map/louisiana> (last visited Feb. 7, 2018).

Join Louisianans for Prison Alternatives. LPA will send you information about ways to participate in local and statewide coalition efforts.

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