NCFL AFF CASE

R2R

We affirm Resolved: US prisons ought to prioritize rehabilitation over deterrence for non-violent drug offenders.

Our Sole Contention is Reducing Recidivism.

We are in an unprecedented age of prison reform. **Katrina Heuvel writes in a 2019 Washington Post article:** many states are already pursuing important reforms; criminal justice reform is already emerging as a key issue in the Democratic presidential primary; the federal government just passed the First Step Act, an unprecedented step. It was significant because it showed that across the ideological spectrum, there is real momentum for more criminal justice reform.

The next step should be to reform the sorry state of American prisons, making them more about redeeming prisoners than punishing them.

According to **Benson at the American Psychological Association in 2003,** until the mid-1970s, rehabilitation was a key part of U.S. prison policy. Prisoners were encouraged to develop occupational skills to reintegrate into society. Since then however, rehabilitation has taken a back seat to a "get tough on crime" approach.

An approach to prisons that emphasized harsh punishment in order to deter crime has failed, and treating the causes of crime would work better. **The Economist Magazine explains in 2017:** Even when police or prisons are effective, criminals are often undeterred. They are typically impulsive and opportunistic, picking fights because they are angry and grabbing loot because it is visible. Which is why rehabilitation is so important: nearly all inmates will eventually be released, and it is far better for everyone if they do not go back to their old ways.

Criminals commit crimes for a reason, often because they feel that it is their last resort. This is especially true for people who struggle to become employed because of lack of education, and have to turn to things like drugs in order to stay afloat. Thus, recidivism rates are incredibly high now. **The Wharton Public Policy Initiative (WPPI) writes in 2017 that** over 75% of released inmates are re-incarcerated within five years of discharge from prison. This high re-offending rate is due to U.S. prisons focusing on punishment, rather than on rehabilitation.

Rehabilitating prisoners would make them better members of society and less likely to commit crimes again. This is for two reasons.

First, therapy.

Cognitive behavioural therapy—counselling prisoners on how to avoid the places, people and situations that prompt them to commit crimes–has proven to be incredible effective in reducing the risk that convicts reoffend.

The Economist writes in 2017: the best rehabilitative tool is cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). It is about helping people to understand the "triggers"—people, places and things—that prompt them to offend. America uses it spottily. A study of over 500 programmes in American prisons found that only 20% involved CBT and only about 5% of individuals were likely to have access to it. Done well, it can reduce recidivism by 10-30%.

Second, education.

Michael Sainato at Observer writes in 2017 that 75 percent of prisoners are illiterate. This is inextricably linked to high recidivism rates. Arming inmates with a solid education is one of the surest ways of reducing recidivism.

However, rates of in-prison education are incredibly low now. **Sainato** continues, reporting that in California, just six percent of inmates are in classes.

The emphasis of academic courses has an enormous impact on prisoner outcomes. **Bender at the Center for American Progress writes in 2018** that individuals who did not complete high school were rearrested at the highest rate—60.4 percent—while those

who had a college degree were rearrested at a rate of 19.1 percent. Formerly incarcerated individuals with low levels of education often find themselves without financial resources or social support systems and are more vulnerable to committing criminal acts rather than becoming reintegrated into society.

Lois Davis at the RAND Corporation continues, reporting that inmates who participated in correctional education programs had 28 percent higher odds of obtaining postrelease employment.

Thus, we affirm.

Cards

We affirm Resolved: US prisons ought to prioritize rehabilitation over deterrence for non-violent drug offenders.

Our Sole Contention is Reducing Recidivism.

We are in an unprecedented age of prison reform

Heuvel 19 Katrina vanden Heuvel [Columnist covering national politics, progressive politics and movements, and foreign policy], 2-12-2019 "For criminal justice reform, the First Step Act is just the start," Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/for-criminal-justice-reform-the-first-step-act-is-just-the-start/2019/02/12/2526e97e-2e24-11e9-8ad3-9a5b113ecd3c_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.5ea57b06daaa //DF

These are just a few of the many issues that remain, from providing more resources for public defenders to cracking down on the insidious use of private prisons that put profit above all else. (Indeed, Trump may want to be seen as a reformer, but the private prison industry donated heavily to his campaign and has prospered greatly from his presidency.) Much of this work has to occur at the state and local level — and **many states are already pursuing important reforms** — but there is significant work to do at the federal level as well. The exit of former attorney general Jeff Sessions, who was committed to an extremely regressive vision of our criminal justice system, has presented some new opportunities. Yet there are obvious reasons to question how much progress is feasible under Trump. To that end, it's encouraging that **criminal justice reform is already emerging as a key issue in the Democratic presidential primary**. Sen. Cory Booker's (D-N.J.) agenda includes legalizing marijuana, increasing funding for public defenders and providing financial incentives for states to reduce their prison populations. Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) has described the criminal justice system as "racist" and called for reform in her official campaign announcement speech Saturday. Last year, presumed candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) introduced legislation that would abolish money bail at the federal level and encourage states to follow suit. Sen. Kamala D. Harris (D-Calif.) has called for bail reform, too, though she is also facing criticism over her record as a prosecutor that she will need to address as the campaign wears on. **The passage of the First Step Act was** certainly **significant**. But that is less because of what it specifically accomplished than **because** of what **it showed. Across the ideological spectrum, there is real momentum for more criminal justice reform**, including bold ideas that Trump is unlikely to ever support. As they work to present a real alternative to Trumpism, progressives would be wise to seize on that momentum and help it grow. The first step was positive, but it shouldn't be the last.

(Benson 03 at the American Psychological Association)

Etienne Benson [Assistant Professor of Social Sciences at UPenn], August 2003, "Rehabilitate or punish?," American Psychological Association, https://www.apa.org/monitor/julaug03/rehab //AM

Until the mid-1970s, rehabilitation was a key part of U.S. prison policy. Prisoners were encouraged to develop occupational skills and to resolve psychological problems--such as substance abuse or aggression--that might interfere with **[to]** their **reintegrate into society.** Indeed, many inmates received court sentences that mandated treatment for such problems. **Since then, however, rehabilitation has taken a back seat to a "get tough on crime"** approach that sees punishment as prison's main function, says Haney. The approach has created explosive growth in the prison population, while having at most a modest effect on crime rates. As a result, the United States now has more than` 2 million people in prisons or jails--the equivalent of one in every 142 U.S.

residents--and another four to five million people on probation or parole. A higher percentage of the population is involved in the criminal justice system in the United States than in any other developed country.

An approach to prisons that emphasized harsh punishment in order to deter crime has failed, and treating the causes of crime would work better. The Economist Magazine explains in 2017: Even when police or prisons are effective, criminals are often undeterred. They are typically impulsive and opportunistic, picking fights because they are angry and grabbing loot because it is visible. Which is why rehabilitation is so important: nearly all inmates will eventually be released, and it is far better for everyone if they do not go back to their old ways.

Economist 17 5-27-2017, "Too many prisons make bad people worse. There is a better way," Economist, https://www.economist.com/international/2017/05/27/too-many-prisons-make-bad-people-worse-there-is-a-better-way //DF

But for many people the aim of incarceration is to reduce the harm caused by criminals. Prisons can do this in three ways. First, they restrain: a thug behind bars cannot break into your house. Second, they deter: the prospect of being locked up makes potential wrongdoers think twice. Third, they reform: under state supervision, a criminal can be taught better habits. On the first count, most prisons succeed, but at a cost. The mass incarceration of certain groups of men, such as black Americans, can tear apart families and communities. And many criminals are kept locked up long past the age at which they cease to pose much of a risk to the public. Violence is a young man's vice; there are not many middle-aged muggers. On the second count, deterrence, prisons are necessary unless we want to bring back flogging. But sentences need not be as long as they are in many countries, especially America. Criminals have short time horizons—a ten-year sentence only deters them slightly more than a one-year sentence, though it costs ten times as much. To deter would-be criminals, what matters most is not the severity of the penalty but the certainty and swiftness with which it is imposed. Criminals restrain themselves only if they think they will be caught and punished. Steven Levitt, an economist, estimates that in America $1 spent on police is at least 20% more effective in preventing crime than $1 spent on prisons. Even when the police are effective, criminals are often undeterred. They are typically impulsive and opportunistic, picking fights because they are angry and grabbing loot because it is visible. **Which is why rehabilitation is so important: nearly all inmates will eventually be released, and it is far better for everyone if they do not go back to their old ways**. The countries that lock up the fewest people tend to be either liberal (Sweden, Finland) or too poor to build many prisons (see chart 2). In the Central African Republic, the incarceration rate is only 16 per 100,000. (By one estimate half the inmates are serving time for witchcraft.) Reserving prison for the worst offenders has hefty benefits. First, it saves money. In America, for example, incarcerating a federal convict costs eight times as much as putting the same convict on probation. Second, it avoids mixing minor offenders with more hardened criminals, who will teach them bad habits. "The low-level guys don't tend to rub off on the higher-level prisoners. It goes the other way," says Ron Gordon of the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, a state body. Modern electronic tags are cheap and effective. In a recent study Rafael Di Tella of Harvard University and Ernesto Schargrodsky of Torcuato Di Tella University compared the effects of electronic tagging versus prison for alleged offenders in Buenos Aires. Earlier research had failed to deal with the fact that criminals who are tagged are less likely to reoffend than the more dangerous ones who are locked up. The authors found a way round this. Alleged criminals in Argentina are assigned randomly to judges for pre-trial hearings. Liberal judges are reluctant to hold them in the country's awful jails, so they often order them to be tagged. So-called mano dura (tough hand) judges prefer to lock them up. The researchers observed what happened to similar offenders under different regimes. Only 13% of those who were tagged were later rearrested; for those sent to prison the figure was 22%. Prison break Some criminals are so dangerous that they need to be locked up. But nearly all will one day be released. Consider Tore (not his real name), an inmate at Bastoy. He spent his 20s selling drugs, drinking and partying. One day, when he was high on methamphetamine and had not slept for three days, he attacked two friends with a knife, over nothing—some expensive clothes. He was arrested, charged and got into another fight while awaiting trial. He was eventually given a 14-year sentence for three attempted murders and intending to sell several kilos of hash. For the first couple of years inside a closed prison, he was furious and blamed "everyone else" for his plight, he says. But then he took a course with a counsellor who

had lived "the same life". She talked to him about his regret for what he had done, and persuaded him that he could never touch alcohol again. It took many months. "It was like freedom," he recalls. At Bastoy he took a carpentry exam. He will probably be released in three years. On that day, he expects to have a job. Bastoy inmates can start working outside 18 months before they are released—the aim is to ensure that every ex-prisoner has a roof, an income and something to do. (In America some prisoners are released after long sentences with little more than clothes and a bus fare.) Eventually Tore plans to set up his own carpentry business. Inmate, you'll have to wait Prisons around the world use a variety of tools to prevent recidivism. It is fiendishly hard to disentangle what influences a convict's future behaviour, but Adam Gelb of the Pew Charitable Trusts, a think-tank, lays out some principles which have been shown to work. First, identify the inmates who are most likely to reoffend. Some good predictors of this cannot be changed, such as a troubled family background and previous criminal history. Age is also crucial—some 68% of federal prisoners in America who are released before the age of 21 are rearrested within 8 years; for the over-60s, it is only 16%. Other risk factors are more malleable. Poor impulse control, substance abuse and the habit of picking anti-social friends can all respond to treatment. Rehabilitation programmes that focus on factors other than crime, such as creative abilities, physical conditioning and self-esteem do not reduce criminal behaviour, argues Edward Latessa of the University of Cincinnati. Boot camps are especially ineffective: they foster aggression and bond criminals together. Oliver Bueno, a former drug-dealer, agrees. "I came out worse," he recalls of his time in a juvenile boot camp in Nevada. "You got beat up all the time by staff," he says, adding that the guards were "ex-military, hillbillies and real racists". He describes having his head shaved and being constantly shouted at. "The abuse got me more and more angry, hating authority," he says. After his release, he went straight back to gangbanging, selling drugs and getting into fights over trivial slights. Shortly before his next arrest, he says, "I had a gun in [another man's] face and I don't even remember what it was about." Perhaps the best tool is cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). This is not about sitting in a circle and sharing one's inner demons. It is about helping people to understand the "triggers"—people, places and things—that prompt them to offend. The counsellor nudges the offender towards minimising negative influences and maximising positive ones. For example, "If you get together with your friend Tom on payday and go crazy, maybe you should avoid Tom on payday," says Mr Gelb. Counsellors should not argue or hector, but show that they are listening and praise offenders for acting responsibly. Norway uses CBT a lot—Tore benefited from it. America uses it spottily. A study of over 500 programmes in American prisons, jails and probation agencies by Faye Taxman of George Mason University found that only 20% involved CBT and only about 5% of individuals were likely to have access to it**. Done well, it can reduce recidivism by 10-30%.** A meta-analysis of 50 CBT programmes in America by Thomas Feucht and Tammy Holt for the National Institute of Justice, a government body, found that 74% were effective or promising. They worked best with juvenile offenders and worst with wife-beaters. There was mixed evidence for the effect on sex offenders, who are hard to reform.

Criminals commit crimes for a reason, often because they feel that it is their last resort. This is especially true for people who struggle to become employed because of lack of education, and have to turn to things like drugs in order to stay afloat. Thus, recidivism rates are incredibly high now. (WPPI 17)

Wharton Public Policy Initiative, 8-17-2017, "The Economic Impact of Prison Rehabilitation Programs," https://publicpolicy.wharton.upenn.edu/live/news/2059-the-economic-impact-of-prison-rehabilitation/for-students/blog/news.php //AM

According to the NAACP, the United States makes up only 5% of the world's population but holds 25% of the world's prison population. Four times more prisoners are incarcerated in the U.S. today than in 1980 due to the War on Drugs. [1] The National Institute of Justice reports that **over 75% of released inmates are re-incarcerated within five years of discharge from prison; this high re-offending rate is due to many U.S. prisons focusing on punishment, rather than on rehabilitation.** [2] While 84% of state prisons offer high school classes, only 27% of state prisons offer college courses. Almost all federal prisons offer vocational training compared to only 44% of private prisons and 7% of jails. [3]

Prioritizing rehabilitation would manifest in two ways.

First, education.

(Sainato 17 - Observer)

Michael Sainato, 7-18-2017, "US Prison System Plagued by High Illiteracy Rates," Observer, https://observer.com/2017/07/prison-illiteracy-criminal-justice-reform/ //AM

An often overlooked aspect of mass incarceration and the criminal justice system in the United States is the abhorrent illiteracy rates in prisons throughout the United States. The Literacy Project Foundation found that three out of five people in U.S. prisons can't read and 85 percent of juvenile offenders have trouble reading. Other research has estimated that **illiteracy rates in prisons are as high as 75 percent of the prison population.** This unaddressed issue in the United States' prison system is inextricably linked to high recidivism rates. In 2006, the San Francisco Chronicle reported, "Research has shown that **arming inmates with a solid education is one of the surest ways of reducing the rate at which they end up back behind bars after being released.**

…

However, rates of in-prison education are incredibly low now.

Officially, **California** has embraced education as an important form of rehabilitation, but the reality is far different. **Just six percent of inmates are in** academic **classes,** and five percent attend vocational classes.**"** This issue is rampant in prisons across the country. When Clifford "Spud" Johnson was sentenced to 210 months in prison for a first time non-violent drug offense, he realized that illiteracy was reinforcing the captivity of his fellow inmates who were already frequently subjected to harsh treatment in a racist criminal justice system designed to perpetuate profits through prison labor.

The emphasis of academic courses has an enormous impact on prisoner outcomes. (Bender 18 at the Center for American Progress)

Kathleen Bender, 3-2-2018, "Education Opportunities in Prison Are Key to Reducing Crime," Center for American Progress, https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/news/2018/03/02/447321/education-opportunities-prison-key-reducing-crime/ //AM

Nationwide, the bulk of corrections spending goes toward housing the ever-growing prison population—a consequence of the rapidly expanding U.S. penal system that disproportionately punishes low-income people of color. Rather than spending more to house the growing prison population and to fund excessive rates of incarceration, federal and state governments should focus instead on supporting rehabilitation and reducing recidivism. According to a study by the U.S. Sentencing Commission (USSC), nearly half of all individuals released from federal prisons are rearrested within eight years of their release, and around half of those rearrested are sent back to jail. The same study found that individuals younger than 21 who are released from federal prison are rearrested at the highest rates of any age group. **Individuals who did not complete high school were rearrested at the highest rate—60.4 percent—while those who had a college degree were rearrested at a rate of 19.1 percent.** While incarcerated young adults and school-aged children are more likely to be rearrested, they also have a lot to gain from educational opportunities while in prison. There is a logical argument for prison education: It is a cost-effective way to reduce crime and leads to long-term benefits across the entire U.S. population. In 2016, the RAND Corporation produced a report that showed that individuals who participate in any type of educational program while in prison are 43 percent less likely to return to prison. In addition to reducing recidivism, education can improve outcomes from one generation to the next. Research shows that children with parents with college degrees are more likely to complete college, which can create social mobility for families. Prisons with college programs have less violence among incarcerated individuals, which creates a safer environment for both incarcerated individuals and prison staff. The significant personal benefits of prison education include increased personal income, lower unemployment, greater political engagement and volunteerism, and improved health outcomes. Moreover, high recidivism—which is exacerbated by lower educational attainment—also reflects a failure of the criminal justice system at large. **Formerly incarcerated individuals with low levels of education often find themselves without** the **financial**

resources or social support systems upon their release from prison **and therefore are more vulnerable to committing criminal acts rather than becoming reintegrated into society.** Criminality negatively impacts families and communities and diverts money and resources that should be spent on preventative measures aimed at keeping people out of prison. Numerous studies highlight the negative social, psychological, and developmental effects of incarceration on the approximately 2.7 million children under age 18 who have at least one parent in prison. These negative effects can include unstable family environments, economic troubles, increased delinquency, poor school performance, and even trauma–and stress-induced mental illness. Investing in prison education rather than increased incarceration will also benefit the American economy. For any individual, not having a high school diploma closes doors to higher education, training, and employment opportunities.

(Davis 13 at The RAND Corporation)

Lois M. Davis, [Lois M. Davis is a senior policy researcher at the RAND Corporation and a professor at the Pardee RAND Graduate School. She has over 25 years research experience in the areas of public safety and public health, with expertise in program evaluation. Davis received her Ph.D. in public health from the University of California, Los Angeles.], 2013, "Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education A Meta-Analysis of Programs That Provide Education to Incarcerated Adults," The RAND Corporation, https://www.bja.gov/Publications/RAND_Correctional-Education-Meta-Analysis.pdf //AM

Our meta-analytic findings provide additional support for the premise that receiving correctional education while incarcerated reduces an individual's risk of recidivating after release. After examining the higher-quality research studies, we found that, on average, inmates who participated in correctional education programs had 43 percent lower odds of recidivating than inmates who did not. These results were consistent even when we included the lower-quality studies in the analysis. This translates into a reduction in the risk of recidivating of 13 percentage points for those who participate in correctional education programs versus those who do not. This reduction is somewhat greater than what had been previously reported by Wilson, Gallagher, and MacKenzie (2000), which showed an average reduction in recidivism of about 11 percentage points. Using more recent studies and ones of higher quality, our findings complement the results published by Wilson, Gallagher, and MacKenzie (2000), Aos, Miller, and Drake (2006), and MacKenzie (2006) and provides further support to the assertion that correctional education participants have lower rates of recidivism than nonparticipants. Given the high percentage of state prison inmates who have not completed high school, participation in high school/general education development (GED) programs was the most common approach to educating inmates in the studies we examined. Focusing only on studies that examined this kind of program relative to no correctional education, we found that inmates who participated in high school/GED programs had 30 percent lower odds of recidivating than those who had not. In general, studies that included adult basic education (ABE), high school/GED, postsecondary education, and/or vocational training programs showed a reduction in recidivism. However, we could not disentangle the effects of these different types of educational programs, because inmates could have participated in multiple programs, and the amount of time that they spent in any given program was rarely reported. Relationship Between Correctional Education Programs and Employment When we look at the relationship between correctional education and postrelease employment, our meta-analyses found—using the full set of studies—that the odds of obtaining employment postrelease among inmates who participated in correctional education (either academic or vocational Summary xvii programs) was 13 percent higher than the odds for those who had not participated. However, only one study fell into the higher-quality category. Thus, if policymakers want to base decisions on the higher-quality studies alone, then we are limited in our ability to detect a statistically significant difference between program participants and nonparticipants in postrelease employment. Still, our results suggest a positive association between correctional education and postrelease employment. Our findings align with those produced in the Wilson, Gallagher, and MacKenzie (2000) meta-analysis, which also found improved odds of employment among correctional education participants. When examining the relationship between correctional education and postrelease employment, one might expect vocational training programs to be more adept than academic education programs at imparting labor market skills, awarding industry-recognized credentials, or connecting individuals with prospective employers. And, indeed, when we looked at the relationship between vocational training—versus academic correctional education programs—and postrelease employment, we found that **individuals who participated in vocational training programs had odds of obtaining postrelease employment that were 28 percent higher than individuals who had not participated.** In comparison, individuals who participated in academic programs (combining ABE, high school/GED, and postsecondary education programs) had only 8

percent higher odds of obtaining postrelease employment than those individuals who had not participated in academic programs. Although the results suggest that vocational training programs have a greater effect than academic programs on one's odds of obtaining postrelease employment, there was no statistically significant difference between the odds ratios for the two types of programs, because the number of vocational training studies was relatively small.

Second, rehabilitation has a culture changing effect on prisons.

According to the Drug Policy Alliance, 85% of drug arrests are for possession only. These people aren't really dangerous to society.

However, sending these people to harsh prison environments actually makes them more likely to become serious criminals.

(Gilligan 12 at the New York Times, a professor at NYU)

James Gilligan, [clinical professor of psychiatry and an adjunct professor of law at New York University, is the author of, among other books, "Preventing Violence" and "Why Some Politicians Are More Dangerous Than Others."] 12-19-2012, "Punishment Fails. Rehabilitation Works.," New York Times, https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/12/18/prison-could-be-productive/punishment-fails-rehabilitation-works //AM

If any other institutions in America were as unsuccessful in achieving their ostensible purpose as our prisons are, we would shut them down tomorrow. Two-thirds of prisoners reoffend within three years of leaving prison, often with a more serious and violent offense. More than 90 percent of prisoners return to the community within a few years (otherwise our prisons would be even more overcrowded than they already are). That is why it is vitally important how we treat them while they are incarcerated. How could we change our prison system to make it both more effective and less expensive? We would need to begin by recognizing the difference between punishment and restraint. When people are dangerous to themselves or others, we restrain them – whether they are children or adults. But that is altogether different from gratuitously inflicting pain on them for the sake of revenge or to "teach them a lesson" – for the only lesson learned is to inflict pain on others. People learn by example: Generations of research has shown that **the more severely** children are **punished, the more violent they become**, as children and as adults. The same is true of adults, **especially** those **in prison**. So the only rational purpose for a prison is to restrain those who are violent from inflicting harm on themselves or others, while we help them to change their behavior from that pattern to one that is nonviolent and even constructive, so that they can return to the community. It would be beneficial to every man, woman and child in America, and harmful to no one, if we were to demolish every prison in this country and replace them with locked, safe and secure home-like residential communities – what we might call an anti-prison.

(Eisen 16 at Time)

Lauren-Brooke Eisen, [Lauren-Brooke Eisen is the senior counsel of the Justice Program at the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law] 12-9-2016, "39% of Prisoners Should Not Be in Prison," Time, http://time.com/4596081/incarceration-report/ //AM

Those more likely to reoffend may need more intervention. We first applied this analysis to people convicted of lower-level offenses. We found that for an estimated 364,000 lower-level offenders (25% of the nationwide prison population), alternatives to prison are likely more effective. We then applied these factors to prisoners who were serving serious crimes. They may warrant prison, but do they really need such lengthy sentences? Research shows long sentences aren't very effective. A 2007 National Bureau of Economic Research study found that prison stays longer than 20 months had "close to no effect" on reducing commission of certain crimes upon release. Other studies show **prison often has a "criminogenic" effect, meaning that**

imprisonment can actually lead people to commit more crimes after release. With that in mind, we took the 58% of prisoners serving time for six major crimes — aggravated assault, murder, nonviolent weapons crimes, robbery, serious burglary, and serious drug trafficking — and tested several methods for cutting sentences, ultimately landing on a 25% reduction.

The impacts are two-fold.

First, decreased costs.

(WPPI 17)

Wharton Public Policy Initiative, 8-17-2017, "The Economic Impact of Prison Rehabilitation Programs," https://publicpolicy.wharton.upenn.edu/live/news/2059-the-economic-impact-of-prison-rehabilitation/for-students/blog/news.php //EH

Although prison rehabilitation programs initially cost prisons money to implement, studies have shown that these programs decrease the recidivism rate, decreasing the prison population. With fewer people in prison, correctional facilities need less money to operate, thus requiring less money from taxpayers. Since educational, vocational, and drug rehabilitation programs decrease the likelihood that inmates will re-offend, they also allow ex-convicts to contribute to society, boosting the economy.Image: The U.S. re-offending rate by crime. Source:.Criminologists have shown that prison education classes drastically reduce the recidivism rate. In Ohio, for example, inmates who enroll in college classes have a re-offending rate of 18%, while prisoners who do not take college courses have a re-incarceration rate of 40%. Prisoners in New York who earn a college degree while incarcerated are almost half as likely to get arrested after release compared to inmates who do not earn a degree. **By decreasing the re-offending rate, prison education programs ultimately save the state money. For example, from 2008 to 2009, Nevada decreased the state's prison population by 1.6%, which saved the state $38 million** and prevented Nevada from spending $1.2 billion on construction costs. **When one fewer Nevadan inmate re-offends, the state saves $22,000.** Since about 40% of state inmates and 27% of federal inmates have not completed high school, prison education programs allow inmates to gain the necessary skills they will need to find work outside of prison. n addition to educational opportunities, job-training programs in prison reduce the re-offending rate and prove to be cost-effective. For example, Minnesota's work-release program, which permits inmates to work in the community as they approach their release dates, lowers recidivism rates. Minnesota prisoners who participate in work-release programs are almost twice as likely to find work within the first couple years of release than inmates who do not have work experience. Prisoners who participate in work-release programs are 16% less likely to be rearrested and 17% less likely to be sent back to prison. From 2007 to 2011, Minnesota's work-release program saved the state $1.25 million due to the decrease in the prison population. In clearer terms, for each inmate who participates in a work-release program, the state saves $700 on average. Vocational training also allows ex-convicts to give back to society and boost the economy. Minnesota prisoners who received job training paid $459,819 more in income taxes than those who did not get job training.

Second, the poverty-to-prison cycle.

(Bender 18 at the Center for American Progress)

Kathleen Bender, 3-2-2018, "Education Opportunities in Prison Are Key to Reducing Crime," Center for American Progress, https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/news/2018/03/02/447321/education-opportunities-prison-key-reducing-crime/ //AM

Nationwide, the bulk of corrections spending goes toward housing the ever-growing prison population—a consequence of the rapidly expanding U.S. penal system that disproportionately punishes low-income people of color. Rather than spending more to house the growing prison population and to fund excessive rates of incarceration, federal and state governments should focus instead on supporting rehabilitation and reducing recidivism. According to a study by the U.S. Sentencing Commission (USSC), nearly half of all individuals released from federal prisons are rearrested within eight years of their release, and around half of those rearrested are sent back to jail. The same study found that individuals younger than 21 who are released from federal prison are rearrested at the highest rates of any age group. Individuals who did not complete high school were rearrested at the highest rate—60.4 percent—while those who had a college degree were rearrested at a rate of 19.1 percent. While incarcerated young adults and school-aged children are more likely to be rearrested, they also have a lot to gain from educational opportunities while in prison. There is a logical argument for prison education: It is a cost-effective way to reduce crime and leads to long-term benefits across the entire U.S. population. In 2016, the RAND Corporation produced a report that showed that individuals who participate in any type of educational program while in prison are 43 percent less likely to return to prison. **In addition to reducing recidivism, education can improve outcomes from one generation to the next. Research shows that children with parents with college degrees are more likely to complete college, which can create social mobility for families.** Prisons with college programs have less violence among incarcerated individuals, which creates a safer environment for both incarcerated individuals and prison staff. The significant personal benefits of prison education include increased personal income, lower unemployment, greater political engagement and volunteerism, and improved health outcomes. Moreover, high recidivism—which is exacerbated by lower educational attainment—also reflects a failure of the criminal justice system at large. Formerly incarcerated individuals with low levels of education often find themselves without the financial resources or social support systems upon their release from prison and therefore are more vulnerable to committing criminal acts rather than becoming reintegrated into society. Criminality negatively impacts families and communities and diverts money and resources that should be spent on preventative measures aimed at keeping people out of prison. Numerous studies highlight the negative social, psychological, and developmental effects of incarceration on the approximately 2.7 million children under age 18 who have at least one parent in prison. These negative effects can include unstable family environments, economic troubles, increased delinquency, poor school performance, and even trauma–and stress-induced mental illness. Investing in prison education rather than increased incarceration will also benefit the American economy. For any individual, not having a high school diploma closes doors to higher education, training, and employment opportunities.

Increased education has an enormous impact. According to The Center for Poverty Research at UC Davis, the poverty rate among college educated Americans is just 5%, compared to 29% for people without a highschool diploma.

This is crucial, as
(Looney 18 at Brookings)

Adam Looney, [Three years of service in the U.S. Treasury Department as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Tax Analysis. Previously, he served as the senior economist for public finance and tax policy with President Obama's Council of Economic Advisers and was an economist at the Federal Reserve Board. He received a PhD in economics from Harvard University and a BA in economics from Dartmouth College.], 3-14-2018, "Work and opportunity before and after incarceration," Brookings, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/es_20180314_looneyincarceration_final.pdf//AM

The tax code provides subsidies for employers to hire ex-felons, to promote employment among low-income workers, and to encourage economic opportunity in distressed areas. These incentives are motivated to different degrees by a belief that economic opportunity facilitates successful reintegration of ex-felons and deters entry into crime. In this paper, we offer a more comprehensive view of the labor market opportunities of ex-prisoners in the U.S. by linking data from the entire prison population to earnings records over a sixteen year period. These

data allow us to examine employment and earnings before and after release and, for younger prisoners, their family income and neighborhood in childhood. After release, only 55 percent of former prisoners have any earnings and those that do tend to earn less than the earnings of a full-time job at the minimum wage. However, their labor market struggles start earlier, with similarly high rates of joblessness prior to incarceration and with **most prisoners grow**ing **up in deep poverty.** For example, **boys who were born into families in the bottom 10 percent of the income distribution** (families earning about $14,000 per year) **are** about **20 times more likely to be in prison in their 30s,** compared to boys born into families in the top 10 percent (families earning more than $143,000 per year). A disproportionate share grew up in neighborhoods where child poverty rates are high, most parents are unmarried, few men are employed, and where most residents are African American or American Indian. The combination of high rates of incarceration and low employment rates among ex-prisoners implies that roughly one third of all not-working 30-year-old men are either in prison, in jail, or are unemployed former prisoners. We discuss the implications of these findings for the design of policies intended to encourage employment and rehabilitation of individuals with a criminal record.

A reduction in poverty saves lives.
(Galea 11 at Columbia University)

Dr. Sandro Galea, 7-5-2011, "How Many U.S. Deaths are Caused by Poverty, Lack of Education, and Other Social Factors?," Columbia University, https://www.mailman.columbia.edu/public-health-now/news/how-many-us-deaths-are-caused-poverty-lack-education-and-other-social-factors //AM

After calculating for the relative risks of mortality from social factors, researchers obtained prevalence estimates for each social factor using primarily Census Bureau data. Individual social factors included education, poverty, health insurance status, employment status and job stress, social support, racism or discrimination, housing conditions and early childhood stressors. Area-level social factors included area-level poverty, income inequality, deteriorating built environment, racial segregation, crime and violence, social capital and availability of open or green spaces. The investigators found that **approximately 245,000 deaths in the United States** in the year 2000 **were attributable to low levels of education,** 176,000 to racial segregation, 162,000 to low social support, **133,000 to individual-level poverty,** 119,000 to income inequality, and 39,000 to area-level poverty. Overall, 4.5% of U.S. deaths were found to be attributable to poverty—midway between previous estimates of 6% and 2.3%. However the risks associated with both poverty and low education were higher for individuals aged 25 to 64 than for those 65 or older. “Social causes can be linked to death as readily as can pathophysiological and behavioral causes,” points out Dr. Galea, who is also Gelman Professor of Epidemiology. For example, the number of deaths the researchers calculated as attributable to low education (245,000) is comparable to the number caused by heart attacks (192,898), which was the leading cause of U.S. deaths in 2000. The number of deaths attributable to racial segregation (176,000) is comparable to the number from cerebrovascular disease (167,661), the third leading cause of death in 2000, and the number attributable to low social support (162,000) compares to deaths from lung cancer (155,521).

Frontlines

Extras

Second, rehabilitation has a culture changing effect on prisons.

According to the Drug Policy Alliance, 85% of drug arrests are for possession only. These people aren't really dangerous to society.

However, sending these people to harsh prison environments actually makes them more likely to become serious criminals. **James Gilligan, a professor at New York University, writes for the New York Times in 2012** that the more severely people are punished, the more violent they become, especially in prison.

In fact, **Eisen at Time Magazine explains in 2016** that prison often has a "criminogenic" effect, meaning that imprisonment can actually lead people to commit more crimes after release.

First, decreased costs.

WPPI explains that with fewer people in prison, correctional facilities need less money to operate, thus requiring less money from taxpayers. For example, from 2008 to 2009, Nevada decreased the state's prison population by 1.6%, which saved the state $38 million. When one fewer inmate re-offends, the state saves $22,000.

According to **Bender,** education can improve outcomes from one generation to the next. Research shows that children with parents with college degrees are more likely to complete college, which can create social mobility for families.

Increased education has an enormous impact. According to The Center for Poverty Research at UC Davis, the poverty rate among college educated Americans is just 5%, compared to 29% for people without a highschool diploma.

This is crucial, as **Adam Looney at Brookings writes in 2018** that most prisoners grow up in deep poverty. Boys who were born into families in the bottom 10 percent of the income distribution are 20 times more likely to be in prison in their 30s.

A reduction in poverty saves lives. **Galea at Columbia University reports in 2011** that poverty leads to an average of 133,000 deaths annually in the United States.