

AFF

We Affirm (US prisons ought to prioritize rehabilitation over deterrence for nonviolent drug offenders)

2.3 million Americans rot in prison right now, giving the US the higher incarceration rate in the world, 4 to 8 times higher than those in other liberal democracies. Even though America holds five percent of earth's population it houses 25 percent of the world prison population. Wagner of the PPI reports that 25% of the America's prison population is made up of nonviolent drug offenders.

The Thesis of our case is simple: criminals are a product of their environment.

Patterson from The New York Times in 2015 writes criminals become criminals because of poor economic conditions: educationless, opportunity-less, jobless, and parentless young adults are forced to join yang gangs and turn to crime in order to live and find a family that they can be a part of. David Frum of CNN in 2013 concludes Americans like to blame a subset of the population for crime in our country, classifying these people as criminals by default, yet in actuality, criminals often have no choice in the matter, as it is the only way to survive their conditions.

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Rather than giving these disadvantaged people help, America has chosen to lock them away.

Trymaine Lee of MSNBC in 2019 explains that 1 in 6 minorities have been taken off the streets and sent to prison - mostly for petty and nonviolent drug offenses, completely destroying communities. After jail criminals are faced with the same conditions that sent them to prison in the first place. Each and every single criminal sentence only makes the situation worse as Sawyer of Northeastern University details that drug arrests distribute criminal records to those stuck in the throes of criminality, hurting employment and increasing the likelihood of longer sentences for future offenses. The Harvard Law Review explains that the general structure of prisons encourage future crime, as constant threats of violence, overcrowded cells and a lack of meaningful work creates an embittered underclass that wants to get even with society, concluding that in the status quo, quote: **"Once drug offenders leave prison, successful reintegration into society is almost impossible"** quantifying that for every 1 person from a low income community who graduates from college, 100 are thrown into jail, and of those 100, 80% of them will return to jail again for the same crime after being released. **Ultimately, deterrence measures like mass incarceration have created communities where there are too many individuals thrown in jail and too few jobs to go around, creating a void that can only be filled with drugs and crime. America has initiated a proxy war on the poor: creating a vicious cycle that throws people into cells then releases them into the frigid outside world with no choice but to turn back towards learned behaviors.**

Only Rehabilitation can change criminals' environment.

Gilligan of New York University writes that rehabilitation centers provide every form of therapy its residents need (substance abuse treatment, psychotherapy, medical and dental care) and every form of education for which the residents were motivated and capable to do (from elementary school to college and graduate school), with the University of Pennsylvania 17 quantifies that quantifying that rehabilitation reduced the frequency of a prisoner reoffending by 220%.

Moreover, The Wharton School of Economics reports that prisoners who go through vocational training are twice as likely to turn away from a life of crime and obtain a stable job using the skills they learned while in treatment centers. James of The Daily Signal concludes in 2018 that rehabilitation offers prisoners a second chance, a way out, rather than allowing them down the path to becoming hardened criminals, ultimately breaking the cycle of continuous criminality. On net, McVay from The UMaryland writes that for every one dollar spent on drug rehabilitation in prison, communities see 8 dollars in societal benefits, and when rehabilitation programs are implemented overall crime declines by 66%.

Each rehabilitative opportunity not only eliminates a potential criminal, but also adds another invaluable member to communities, turning a prisoner into a productive paragon that can help build up targeted communities and finally end the cyclical pattern of destructive violence.

Thus, we stand proud to Affirm the Resolution.

NEG

We negate the resolution

The Thesis of our case is simple: Hard Problems Require Hard Solutions

Violence is coming.

Metz of the World Politics Review explains that Mexican Drug Cartels have turned their eyes north and are looking to expand their operations to American soil by tapping into inner city street gangs. **Horwitz of The Washington Post** finds that as a result quote “drug cartels have have extended their reach deeper into the United States, establishing inroads across the Midwest and Southeast” creating a 100,000 member strong gang presence in Chicago alone. **Morse of the Pacific Standard** concludes in 2017 that our enemy when it comes to fighting the war on drugs is no longer run of the mill local gangs, rather our new opponents are cartels worth hundreds of billions that have already killed hundreds of thousands while conquering Mexico who are now coming to America.

Unfortunately, Rehabilitation is not an option when it comes to cartel members. **Schmidt of West Point** in 2012 explains that Cartels are built upon loyalty and discipline. If either of those fail then the whole cartel collapses and fractures from the inside out as its organizational power turns into dust. **In order to enforce these values on their members Cartels work through fear.** **Lawson of The Rolling Stone** explains in 2018 that cartel members from high ranking drug dealers to lowly gangsters are tied permanently to their group, if a member even thinks about leaving both them and their family will be killed.

The implication of this is that rehabilitation programs will not work on cartel members: because no matter how hard you try to reform them they will always be bound to their cartel or else they will be killed, along with their family, as a result, the only option when it comes to taking cartel members off the streets for the maximum amount of time is through long punishing prison sentences that will destabilize the organizations they work for.

As such, hardline deterrence is the only way to ensure America win the war against cartels.

Bhatt from The New Yorker in 2018 reports that when low level cartel criminals are caught, the Drug Enforcement Agency uses the threat of harsh prison sentences to make them become informants, garnering over 18,000 sources over the years. However, affirming the resolution and turning towards peaceful rehabilitation eliminates law enforcement’s bargaining chip, removing the incentive for cartel members to reveal information. **The logic is simple: if the punishment isn’t harsh there is no reason to take the risk of snitching on the organization they work for.**

Bhatt explains that the DEA uses intelligence provided by informants to set up targeted strikes against cartels. These offensive measures are highly effective, **Wylar of The Business Insider** reveals that back in 2011 a single sting operation brought down the La Familia cartel, leading to the arrest of 2,000 high level cartel members, destruction of 840 tons of meth, and seizure of hundreds of arms such as AK 47s. **The DEA** furthers that each bust dismantles entire supply chains, dealing huge damage to cartels.

However, even if these operations were not effective, the mere threat of heavy punishment is enough to defeat cartels. **Caulkins of The Rand Corporation** finds that because of powerful deterrence laws, it becomes exponentially riskier to sell drugs, concluding that harsher drug laws in the end force cartels to raise the price of their drugs which decreases sales. Critically, **Luhnow of the Wall Street Journal** finds that even just decreasing cartel profits and supplies has a real tangible impact when it comes to limiting the amount of devastation and violence cartels enact.

On The Whole, **Kuziemko of Harvard University reporting in 2011** that consumption of drugs like cocaine from cartels could be up to 20% higher if it wasn’t for harsh drug laws and **Woody of The Business Insider in 2017** reports that 5 out of 6 Mexican drug cartels operating in the US are declining in power while at the same time potential violence has been heavily limited.

Because we understand that dire circumstances necessitate drastic action, we stand proud to negate.