



**STATE OF ALABAMA
LEGISLATURE**
11 SOUTH UNION STREET
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130



February 26, 2014

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Senior Policy Advisor
Bureau of Justice Assistance
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Washington, DC 20531

Adam Gelb
Director, Public Safety Performance Project
The Pew Charitable Trusts
901 E St. NW, 10th Floor
Washington, DC 20004

Lindsey Cramer
Justice Reinvestment Initiative
Urban Institute
2100 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

Dear Ms. James, Mr. Gelb and Ms. Cramer:

Alabama would like to participate in the Justice Reinvestment Initiative process. This letter is a request for Justice Reinvestment technical assistance to help our state implement more cost-effective corrections policies and reinvest in strategies to increase public safety. Our application comes with a full understanding of the Justice Reinvestment process, how it can have an impact in Alabama, and a full commitment from state leaders to contribute the necessary resources to succeed. We are dedicated to working intensively with the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and the Council of State Governments Justice Center to identify and implement cost-effective, evidence-based policy solutions that improve Alabama's criminal justice system.

Alabama's corrections system faces the kinds of challenges that the justice reinvestment process was designed to address. The number of people incarcerated in Alabama state prisons increased 16 percent, from 23,453 to 26,747 inmates between FY 2008 and FY 2012. Currently, Alabama corrections system facilities are at 192 percent of capacity. Also the current inmate-to-officer ratio is high, at 11 to 1. The State of Alabama spends \$42 a day to house an inmate in our correctional facilities. This is the lowest amount spent by any state in the country, and expenditure has changed very little over the last five fiscal years.

These statistics reveal just a few examples of why engaging in the Justice Reinvestment process would greatly benefit the state of Alabama by helping us identify cost-effective, data-driven solutions to reducing our prison population.

Our state leaders recognize that we must collect and analyze criminal justice data to determine the root causes of prison population growth. We must also develop policy options based on that data in order to both reduce our prison population and make our state safer. We need the assistance of the Council of State Governments Justice Center to help us develop consensus-based solutions.

As this letter indicates, all three branches of government are supportive and enthusiastic about employing the Justice Reinvestment process. In fact, the Alabama Legislature recently passed Senate Joint Resolution 20 creating the Alabama Prison Reform Task Force, which is charged with reviewing data analyses, engaging stakeholders, and considering policy options to improve our justice system. We are also committed to having bipartisan representation on the task force.

Additionally, our state agencies are already working with the Council of State Governments Justice Center to assess the availability of data to inform this effort. These preliminary steps demonstrate our commitment to providing access to individual-level data and cooperating with an analysis of our criminal justice system. If granted this opportunity, our state is prepared to contribute to this effort by assisting with qualitative and quantitative research, policy analysis, communications support, project management, and administrative tasks, if needed.

Alabama state leaders are motivated and excited to begin the JRI process. Pending funding approval, we would like to officially launch the project on May 1, 2014. During this time we hope to convene the Alabama Prison Reform Task Force for its first meeting to review the project objectives and a presentation of initial data findings. The Governor's Office has also offered to host a press conference to publicly launch the project in collaboration with criminal justice stakeholders and state leaders.

Senate Joint Resolution 20 identified a variety of issues that Alabama is interested in analyzing during the Justice Reinvestment process and potentially developing policy options around. A few such issue areas are included in the list below:

- Court procedures and sentencing
- Data on reported crime and arrests
- Problem-solving court policies
- Felony probation and parole supervision
- Behavioral health
- Jails and misdemeanor probation
- Prison admissions and length of stay
- Corrections and parole processes
- Community corrections
- Recidivism rates

Alabama is committed to increasing public safety and improving our approach to criminal justice by engaging in this data driven process. We believe that justice reinvestment technical assistance will help us achieve our goals, and we would welcome and greatly appreciate your support.

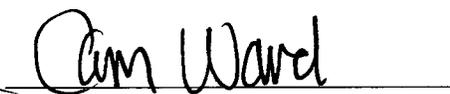
Sincerely,


Governor Robert Bentley
State of Alabama


Chief Justice Roy Moore
Alabama Supreme Court


Speaker Mike Hubbard
Alabama House of Representatives


President Pro Tempore Del Marsh
Alabama Senate


Senator Cam Ward
Chairman, Joint Prison Committee


Commissioner Kim Thomas
Department of Corrections