



RESERVE PRISON FOR SERIOUS OFFENSES

- **Convert Petty “Wobblers” to Misdemeanors:**

A “wobbler” is an offense that can be charged as a misdemeanor or a felony. Dozens of nonviolent offenses classified as “wobblers” can result in lengthy and expensive prison sentences. This includes nonviolent property crimes like forgery, embezzlement, and vandalism. Converting a number of wobblers into straight misdemeanors will reduce state prison spending by \$700 million each year.

Estimated General Fund savings of \$700 million annually.

- **Keep Response to Petty Drug Offenses Local:**

Incarceration of low-level drug offenders remains a significant drag on the state’s criminal justice system, diverting law enforcement resources, as well as clogging courts, jails and prisons. People convicted of simple drug possession, or drug possession with intent to sell, should be handled at the county level, whether through community service, treatment, probation or some combination of those.

Estimated General Fund savings of \$1 billion annually.

- **Respond to Youth Offenders Closer to Home:**

With an annual budget of over \$436 million and an astronomic recidivism rate of 72%, California’s Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) youth prison system drains state resources and offers little to nothing in return. Youth currently housed in state DJJ prisons should be diverted to county and regional custody options, phasing out DJJ prisons in three years. Half of the current DJJ budget could be allocated to counties as well as a state oversight and enforcement office in order to ensure best practices.

Estimated General Fund savings of \$200 million annually.

- **Restore Funding for Recidivism-Reduction Programs to Increase Sentence Credits:**

Last year, the Legislature increased sentence credits for inmates who complete rehabilitation programs such as GED, college degrees, and vocational training. At the same time, CDCR cut \$175 million from such programs. Funding for these programs should be restored to ensure that more inmates leave prison with the skills needed to stay out of prison, and to provide access to increased credits for more inmates.

COMPREHENSIVE REFORM REQUIRES MORE

In order to truly achieve lasting budget reforms that will improve public safety, the state must address deeper problems with its current system of criminal justice. A sentencing commission must be established, and its conclusions should be implemented unless 2/3 of the legislature rejects a given provision. Two key areas of reform that should also be addressed are California’s Three Strikes law and the death penalty, both of which cost the state billions each year in prison spending, with no demonstrable returns for public safety. The state should limit Three Strikes to violent offenses and replace the death penalty with effective alternatives.

Replacing the death penalty with permanent imprisonment would save \$250 million annually.

Reforming Three Strikes would result in General Fund savings of more than \$1 billion annually.