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Improving Community Supervision to Safely Reduce Incarceration in West Virginia

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Executive Summary

West Virginia has an incarceration crisis. From 2010 to 2020, West Virginia was one of only four states to increase its incarceration rate and there are nearly 3,000 more people in jail or prison today than a decade ago.¹

This rapid growth in incarceration has continued unabated during the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbating dangerous overcrowding in West Virginia's regional jails and state prisons and contributing to the deadly spread of the virus among incarcerated people, corrections officials, and their families.

A key contributor to West Virginia's high incarceration rate is the large number of prison admissions that result from violations of probation or parole supervision (revocations). In 2020, nearly half (45 percent) of prison admissions resulted from a revocation of community supervision and the vast majority were for technical violations that did not involve a new crime such as failing a drug test or missing a meeting with a probation or parole officer.²

Revocations continue to be a major driver of prison admissions in West Virginia despite policy changes that have been adopted to reduce costly and ineffective prison terms for technical violations of supervision. While the Justice Reinvestment Act of 2013 (SB 371) likely helped slow explosive prison population growth, and led to significant new investments in community-based substance use disorder treatment, considerably more needs to be done to reduce revocations and keep people out of jail or prison for simply breaking the rules of supervision.

Fortunately, there is considerable evidence and broad consensus on both sides of the political aisle that West Virginia can build on SB 371 to reduce crime and incarceration. In this brief, we further examine the role that revocations play in West Virginia's incarceration crisis and recommend data-driven reforms that have been supported by bipartisan political majorities and proven to safely reduce incarceration in other states.

Key Findings

- West Virginia is a national outlier in regard to rising incarceration. From 2009 to 2019, West Virginia's imprisonment rate grew 10 percent while the state imprisonment rate fell 16 percent nationally.
- Prison admissions for violations of probation and parole supervision are a major driver of West Virginia's high imprisonment rate. According to the Council of State Governments Justice Center (CSG), supervision revocations increased each of the past three years and accounted for nearly half (45 percent) of prison admissions in 2020.
- West Virginia is one of only four states to increase revocations for supervision violations during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a 25 percent increase from 2019 to 2020 – the highest increase in the nation.
- The vast majority of revocations are due to violations of supervision conditions that do not involve a new crime. In 2020, 74 percent of supervision revocations were for technical violations rather than new criminal charges or convictions.

1 Weihua Li, David Eads, and Jamiles Lartey, "There Are Fewer People Behind Bars Now Than 10 Years Ago. Will It Last?" The Marshall Project, September 20, 2021. <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2021/09/20/there-are-fewer-people-behind-bars-now-than-10-years-ago-will-it-last>.

2 Council of State Governments Justice Center, "More Community, Less Confinement: West Virginia" (September 2021). Available: <https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/more-community-less-confinement/50-state-reports/?usState=WV>.

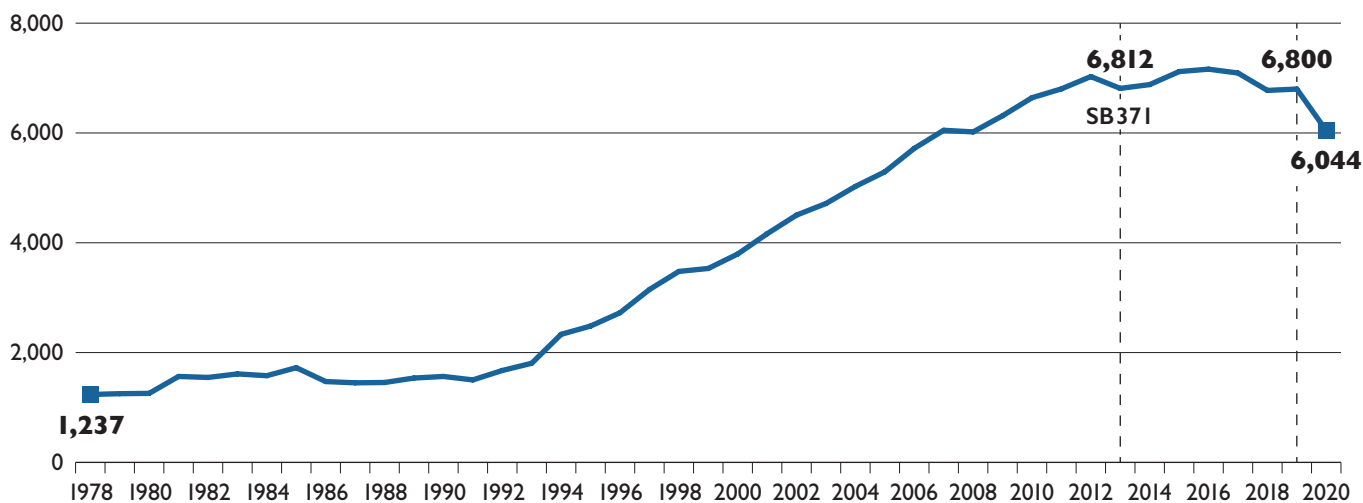
- Numerous other states including Louisiana, Missouri, Virginia, and South Dakota have adopted evidence-based reforms to reduce the supervision population and limit revocations to prison with promising results for both public safety and state budgets.
- West Virginia policymakers should consider prohibiting revocations for technical violations and adopting presumptive probation and earned discharge policies to safely reduce correctional control and free up resources for critical substance use and mental health care investments.

Background on West Virginia’s Incarceration Crisis

West Virginia’s imprisonment rate has grown dramatically over the past four decades, even as other states have taken meaningful steps to reduce their prison populations. From 1978 to 2019, the West Virginia prison population increased 550 percent from 1,237 to 6,800 (**Figure 1**). This growth happened during a period of rising imprisonment nationally, but far exceeds the 369 percent increase across all states.³ The number of people in prison in West Virginia fell 11 percent from 2019 to 2020, but this decline was driven by a sharp reduction in admissions (36 percent) resulting from delayed court proceedings due to COVID-19 rather than emergency releases or other policy changes aimed at sustained decarceration.⁴ Releases actually fell 17 percent during the first year of the pandemic and West Virginia reduced its prison population by less than the national average (15 percent).⁵

The prison system is also marked by stark racial disparities and a rising imprisonment rate for women. Black people make up only four percent of West Virginia’s population but account for 13 percent of the state’s prison population.⁶ West Virginia has the ninth highest imprisonment rate of women in the country⁷ and the female prison population grew 22 percent between 2007 and 2017, driven by an increase in prison admissions for drug, property, and public order offenses.⁸

FIGURE 1
West Virginia’s Prison Population Has Grown Dramatically
 West Virginia’s prison population, 1978-2020



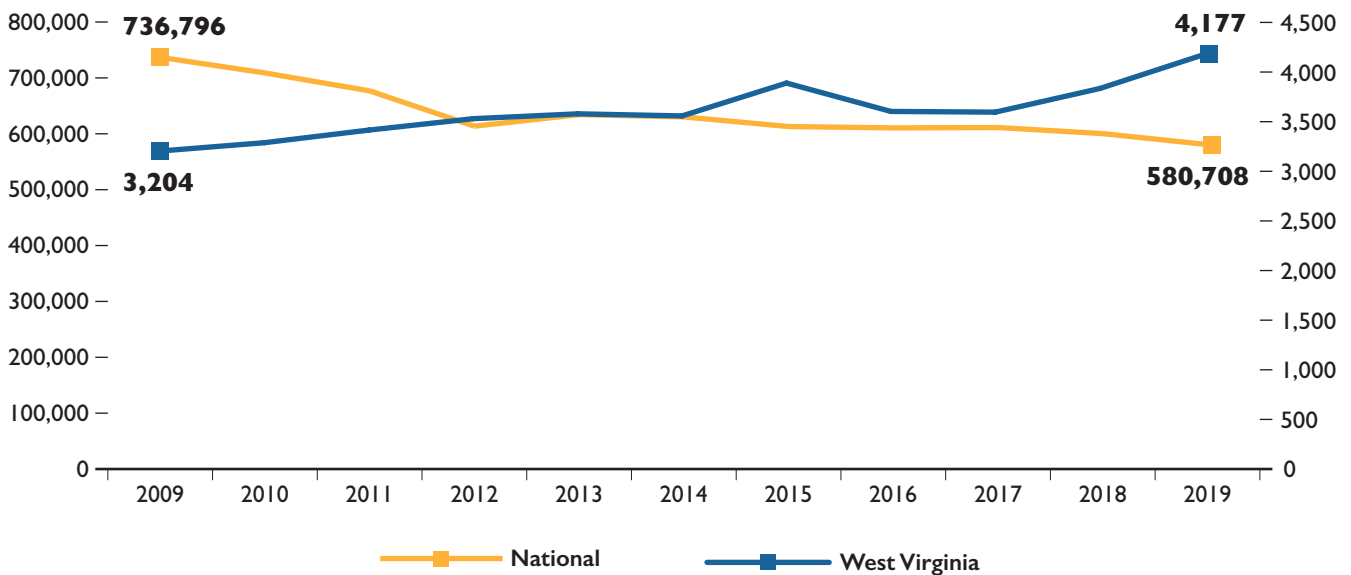
Source: The Bureau of Justice Statistics, United States Department of Justice

3 Corrections Statistical Analysis Tool (CSAT), Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice. Accessed November 2021.
 4 E. Ann Carson. “Prisoners in 2020 – Statistical Tables” Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice. Available: https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/p20st.pdf?utm_content=juststats&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery.
 5 Ibid.
 6 Ashley Nellis, “The Color of Justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparities in State Prisons.” The Sentencing Project, (2021). Available: <https://www.sentencingproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/The-Color-of-Justice-Racial-and-Ethnic-Disparity-in-State-Prisons.pdf>.
 7 E. Ann Carson. “Prisoners in 2019” Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice. Available: <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p19.pdf>.
 8 American Civil Liberties Union, “Blueprint for Smart Justice: West Virginia” (2018). Available: <https://50stateblueprint.aclu.org/assets/reports/SJ-Blueprint-WV.pdf>.

West Virginia sought to contain the prison population through the adoption of the Justice Reinvestment Act of 2013, which included policy changes aimed at increasing parole grant rates and reducing supervision revocations. This important legislation helped slow the explosive prison population growth of the prior two decades, but West Virginia remains a national outlier when it comes to rising imprisonment. Between 2009 and 2019, West Virginia’s imprisonment rate grew 10 percent while the national state imprisonment rate fell 16 percent.⁹

While publicly available data is limited, available sources suggest that rising prison admissions are a leading driver of West Virginia’s stubbornly high imprisonment rate. Prison admissions rose 30 percent between 2009 and 2019, despite declining by more than one-fifth nationally (**Figure 2**).¹⁰

FIGURE 2
Prison Admissions Rising in West Virginia Despite National Declines
 State and national prison admissions, 2009-2019



Source: The Bureau of Justice Statistics, United States Department of Justice

West Virginia’s rising prison admissions are due in part to its relatively low use of probation. In 2018, the Mountain State had the fifth lowest probation rate (600 adults per 100,000 state residents) in the nation.¹¹ In fact, the probation rate in West Virginia is less than half the state average nationally (1,300 adults per 100,000 state residents).¹²

While low probation rates are not themselves an issue, the available data on prison admissions and probation entries suggest that probation rates are low because judges disproportionately sentence people to prison rather than supervision in the community. In 2018, prison admissions accounted for 29 percent of total probation entries and prison admissions in West Virginia compared to just 19 percent in other states.¹³

9 Corrections Statistical Analysis Tool (CSAT). Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice. Accessed November 2021.

10 Ibid.

11 Danielle Kaeble and Mariel Alper, “Probation and Parole in the United States, 2017-2018” Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice. Available: <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ppus1718.pdf>.

12 Ibid.

13 Court disposition rate estimated using probation entries from “Probation and Parole in the United States, 2017-2018” and prison admissions from “Prisoners in 2019.”

For those who are initially sentenced to probation, incarceration remains a likely outcome due to revocations for supervision violations. While deep sentencing reforms are urgently needed in West Virginia, this report focuses specifically on these supervision revocations and the role they play in the broader incarceration crisis.

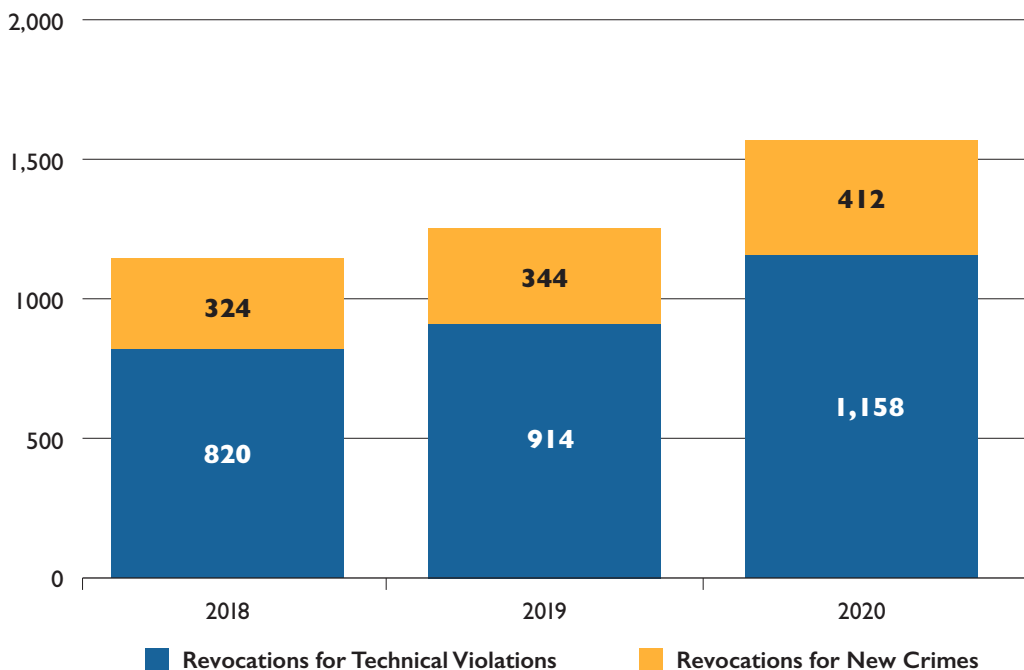
Supervision Revocations are a Major Driver of the Prison Population

Probation and parole are intended to be alternatives to incarceration but are instead one of the leading drivers of the prison population in West Virginia. New research from CSG shows that prison admissions for supervision revocations accounted for nearly half (45 percent) of prison admissions in 2020.¹⁴

The vast majority of these revocations were for technical violations of supervision conditions that did not involve a new crime – for example, failing a drug test or missing a meeting with a probation or parole officer. According to CSG, 74 percent of supervision revocations in West Virginia were for technical violations in 2020.¹⁵ Data provided to the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy by the Division of Probation Services similarly shows that three-quarters of probation revocations were for technical violations only in 2020.¹⁶

Of particular concern is the fact that probation and parole revocations have risen each of the past three years despite past reforms aimed at reducing incarceration for technical violations. From 2018 to 2020, prison admissions for supervision violations increased 37 percent from 1,144 to 1,570 (**Figure 3**).¹⁷ This increase was driven by a 79 percent increase in revocations for technical violations that did not involve a new crime.

FIGURE 3
Revocations for Technical Violations Rising Sharply in West Virginia
 Prison admissions for probation and parole violations, 2018-2020



Source: Council of State Governments Justice Center

¹⁴ Council of State Governments Justice Center, “More Community, Less Confinement: West Virginia” (September 2021). Available: <https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/more-community-less-confinement/50-state-reports/?usState=WV>.

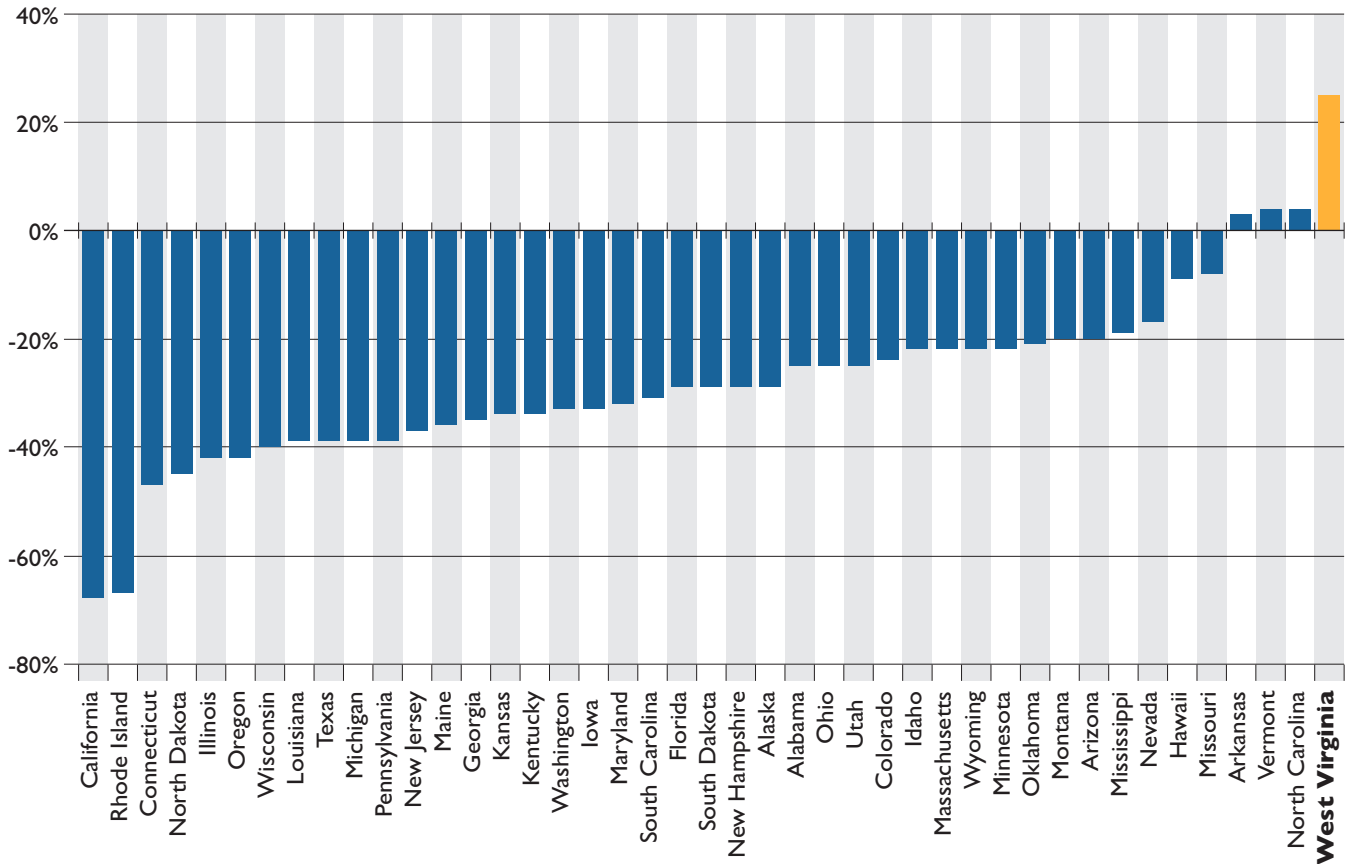
¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Data provided in an email from Stephanie Bond, Director of Probation Services, West Virginia Judiciary on Thursday, November 14, 2021.

¹⁷ Council of State Governments Justice Center, “More Community, Less Confinement: West Virginia” (September 2021). Available: <https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/more-community-less-confinement/50-state-reports/?usState=WV>.

As many states were taking bold action the past year amid the COVID-19 pandemic to reduce prison admissions and slow the spread of the virus among incarcerated people and corrections staff, West Virginia moved in a dramatically different – and dangerous – direction. The Mountain State is one of only four states to increase revocations for supervision violations during the pandemic, with a 25 percent increase from 2019 to 2020 alone – the highest increase in the nation (**Figure 4**). West Virginia is an extreme outlier in this regard and many neighboring states were able to significantly reduce revocations including Pennsylvania (-39 percent), Kentucky (-34 percent), Maryland (-32 percent), and Ohio (-25 percent).

FIGURE 4
West Virginia is One of Only Four States to Increase Revocations During the Pandemic
 Percent change in supervision revocations by state, 2019-2020



Source: Council of State Governments Justice Center

Note: Data not provided for Delaware, Indiana, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Tennessee, or Virginia.

It is imperative for West Virginia’s policymakers to address rising supervision revocations, which are an enormous drain on taxpayers and the economy, cause irreparable damage to our families and communities, and do nothing to make us safer. In fact, research shows that incarceration does not curb drug use or reduce recidivism, and a new meta analysis of 116 studies shows that reoffending actually increases by an average of eight percentage points when a person is sent to jail or prison rather than sentenced to a non-incarceration sanction such as probation.¹⁸

The remainder of this brief describes previous reforms adopted as part of the Justice Reinvestment Act of 2013 and highlights evidence-based policy changes that other states have adopted to reduce incarceration and correctional control, limit revocations for technical violations of supervision, and support the needs of people who are on supervision.

¹⁸ Damon M. Petrich, Travis C. Pratt, Cheryl Lero Jonson, and Francis T. Cullen, “Custodial Sanctions and Reoffending: A Meta-Analytic Review,” *Crime and Justice*, volume 50, 2021. Available: <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdf/10.1086/715100>.

The Justice Reinvestment Act: An Important First Step

Seeking to curb rising imprisonment rates and unsustainable corrections spending, West Virginia adopted Senate Bill 371 in 2013. More commonly known as the Justice Reinvestment Act, this important legislation has helped slow West Virginia's explosive prison population growth and allowed the Mountain State to make significant new investments in community-based treatment.

At the time of the legislation, West Virginia's prison population had increased 50 percent over the previous decade and was projected to grow another 24 percent by 2018 at a cost of at least \$350 million.¹⁹ With technical assistance from CSG, an interbranch Justice Reinvestment Working Group reviewed data and recommended policy changes that would safely reduce incarceration, improve community supervision, and reinvest savings in more effective public safety strategies.

The Justice Reinvestment Working Group found that one of the biggest drivers of the growing prison population was the number of people sent to prison for probation or parole revocations, many for technical violations stemming from substance use disorder. These revocations resulted in excessive prison terms that did not address the underlying drug use and made it harder for people to succeed after they were released. In 2011, the average time served for probation and parole revocations was nearly two years and violations for possessing or using drugs and alcohol were cited in 78 percent of revocations for technical violations of parole.²⁰

Low parole grant rates were also a major driver of West Virginia's prison population growth and resulted in large numbers of people serving their entire sentence in prison without any period of parole supervision in the community. In response to these findings, legislators adopted Senate Bill 371 in May 2013 with bipartisan votes of 33-0 in the Senate and 81-17 in the House of Delegates.²¹

The Justice Reinvestment Act contained a wide range of reforms aimed at increasing parole grant rates, improving probation and parole practices, limiting prison time served for technical violations of community supervision, and investing in community-based substance use disorder treatment. Among other changes, Senate Bill 371 has:

- Streamlined the parole process by requiring the West Virginia Parole Board to interview people without a home plan or unnecessary mental health evaluation;
- Established a system of graduated sanctions for community supervision violations and caps on revocation time of 60 and 120 days, respectively, for first and second technical violations; and
- Directed savings from reduced imprisonment to a newly created Treatment Supervision Grant Program to provide inpatient and outpatient treatment, transitional housing, and other recovery support services to people sentenced to "treatment supervision."²²

Due in part to the reforms in Senate Bill 371, West Virginia's prison population declined three percent between 2012 and 2019, outperforming the projected impact of the legislation and flattening the curve of West Virginia's explosive prison population growth over the previous decade.²³ More than \$25 million in savings from the legislation has also been reinvested in the Treatment Supervision Grant Program since 2014, expanding the capacity

19 Chloe Warnberg and Samantha Harvell, "Justice Reinvestment Initiative: West Virginia" Urban Institute (October 2019). Available: https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2020/03/06/justice_reinvestment_initiative_jri_west_virginia.pdf.

20 Council of State Governments Justice Center, "Justice Reinvestment In West Virginia: Analyses & Policy Options to Reduce Spending on Corrections & Reinvest in Strategies to Increase Public Safety," (January 2013). Available: https://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/BJA.JR-West-Virginia_v5.pdf.

21 The Justice Reinvestment Act of 2013 (Senate Bill 371). Available: https://www.wvlegislature.gov/bill_status/bills_history.cfm?input=371&year=2013&sessiontype=RS&btype=bill.

22 Alison Shames and Ram Subramanian, "A Path to Recovery: Treating Opioid Use in West Virginia's Criminal Justice System" Vera Institute of Justice (October 2017). Available: <https://www.vera.org/downloads/publications/a-path-to-recovery-treating-opioid-use-west-virginia-criminal-justice-system.pdf>.

23 The Council of State Governments Justice Center, "West Virginia's Justice Reinvestment: Strengthening Community Supervision, Increasing Accountability, and Expanding Access to Substance Use Treatment" (June 2014). Available: <https://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/West-Virginias-Justice-Reinvestment-Summary-Report.pdf>.

of counties to deliver drug treatment and other services to people on supervision.²⁴ This funding has fostered stronger collaboration between case managers and service providers in the community, and allowed West Virginia to leverage Medicaid funding for behavioral health services provided through drug courts and day report centers.²⁵

Despite this progress, prison admissions are higher today than before the legislation and West Virginia's jails and prisons remain dangerously overcrowded. Although the reforms adopted as part of the Justice Reinvestment Act helped slow prison population growth, the legislation did not include any sentencing reforms or changes to the front end of the system that would lead to deep, sustained decarceration. To meaningfully reduce the prison population, West Virginia must consider a wide range of additional reforms to decrease prison admissions and time served. The remainder of this report focuses on the policy options for reducing the community supervision population and the number of people sent to prison for supervision violations.

West Virginia Must Do More to Reduce Revocations

While Senate Bill 371 was an important first step, other states have done much more to reduce their supervision populations and revocations with positive results. Indeed, evidence from evaluations of Justice Reinvestment Initiative policies in other states show that more ambitious reforms work to reduce the supervision population and limit costly revocations without harming public safety.

- **Missouri** adopted an earned discharge policy in 2012 that allows people on probation and parole to earn 30 days off their sentence for every month they are in compliance with the rules of supervision. The supervision population fell 18 percent over the first three years of implementation as a result, and a study by the Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew) found that supervision terms were reduced by an average of 14 months without any change in recidivism rates.²⁶
- **Louisiana** adopted a 90-day cap on jail and prison terms for technical violations of supervision in 2007. An evaluation of the policy by the Pew found that the cap on revocation time substantially reduced incarceration, shortening the average time served for revocations by 281 days and leading to more than \$17 million in state savings in the first five years of implementation.²⁷ The study also found that revocations for new crimes declined, leading lawmakers to expand the policy in 2017 and lower the periods of confinement to 15, 30, and 45 days for first, second, and subsequent revocations, respectively.²⁸
- **South Carolina** adopted a system of graduated sanctions in 2010 that allows probation and parole officers to impose non-incarceration sanctions such as community service in lieu of a revocation. An evaluation of the policy by the Urban Institute found that revocations declined 46 percent in the first five years of implementation, and people on probation or parole were 33 percent less likely to be incarcerated or reincarcerated in the first year of supervision.²⁹

In the past year, Virginia and New York have adopted even bolder community supervision reforms to prohibit supervision revocations for technical violations and dramatically shorten probation sentences. House Bill 2038 in Virginia

24 Funding for the Treatment Supervision Grant Program is published annually by the Justice and Community Services (JCS) Section of the West Virginia Division of Administrative Services. The most recent Justice Reinvestment Initiative Annual Report is available: https://www.wvlegislature.gov/legisdocs/reports/agency/J03_FY_2021_15257.pdf.

25 The Council of State Governments Justice Center, "West Virginia Expands Access to Substance Use Treatment through Justice Reinvestment" (November 2015). Available: <https://csgjusticecenter.org/2015/11/12/west-virginia-expands-access-to-substance-use-treatment-through-justice-reinvestment/>.

26 Pew Charitable Trusts, "Missouri Policy Shortens Probation and Parole Terms, Protects Public Safety," (August 2016). Available: <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2016/08/missouri-policy-shortens-probation-and-parole-terms-protects-public-safety#:~:text=Protects%20Public%20Safety-,Overview,the%20conditions%20of%20their%20sentences.>

27 Pew Charitable Trusts, "Reducing Incarceration for Technical Violations in Louisiana Evaluation of revocation cap shows cost savings, less crime" (October 2014). Available: <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2014/11/reducing-incarceration-for-technical-violations-in-louisiana>.

28 Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, "Louisiana's Justice Reinvestment Reforms Practitioners' Guide" (August 2017). Available: https://www.lasc.org/documents/LA_Practitioners_Guide_Justice_Reinvestment_Reforms_FINAL_2017-8-1.pdf.

29 Elizabeth Pelletier, Bryce Peterson, and Ryan King, "Assessing the Impact of South Carolina's Parole and Probation Reforms" Urban Institute (April 2017). Available: https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/89871/south_carolina_jri_policy_assessment_final_0.pdf.

prohibits revocations for the first technical violation, and caps incarceration at no more than 14 days for a second violation or 30 days for a third or subsequent violation.³⁰ It also limits probation terms to no more than the maximum sentence for the underlying conviction, including no more than one year for misdemeanor convictions. Virginia also recently passed legislation to end the practice of suspending driver's licenses solely for unpaid court fines and fees.

New York's Less is More Act was signed into law in September 2021 and includes far-ranging reforms to community supervision policy. The Less is More Act builds on Missouri's earned discharge policy by allowing people to earn supervision credits equal to 30 days for every month of compliance and awarding up to two years of credits retroactively to people currently on parole supervision. The legislation also restricts the use of incarceration for technical violations, including prohibiting revocations or periods of confinement for the first two violations and limiting incarceration to no more than 30 days for subsequent violations. Due process is also bolstered under the bill, including ending the practice of incarcerating people for technical violations without a hearing.

Below are suggestions for how to tailor these types of reforms to West Virginia's current laws and community supervision policies.

Policy Reforms to Improve Community Supervision in West Virginia

The Justice Reinvestment Act and other recent changes to community supervision policy have helped slow West Virginia's explosive prison population growth and allowed the state to invest in desperately underfunded community-based programs. These reforms have helped increase the availability of outpatient and inpatient medical services, peer recovery coaching, and safe housing for people who are recovering from substance use or mental health disorders.

Despite these improvements, West Virginia's imprisonment rate continues to rise and revocations of probation and parole supervision remain a major driver of the prison population. In fact, supervision revocations increased 25 percent from 2019 to 2020 at a time when most other states took dramatic steps to reduce prison admissions for supervision violations as part of efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Reversing this trend must be an urgent priority for policymakers and other state leaders, and West Virginia should adopt further community supervision reforms this legislative session to build on the goals of justice reinvestment and the progress made by Senate Bill 371. The data and research in this brief point to several common-sense policy changes that are most needed:

- **Prohibit revocations for technical violations of supervision that do not involve intentional absconding or a new crime.** In 2020, The Pew Charitable Trusts and a leading group of community supervision experts recommended eliminating revocations for technical violations of supervision conditions including failed drug tests and failure to pay fines and fees. Eliminating these costly and ineffective revocations for probation and parole violations would allow West Virginia to expand interventions that focus on the needs of the individual and underlying reasons for the violation.
- **Cap revocation time for probation violations that do not involve a new felony conviction.** When new criminal charges or misdemeanor convictions do occur, West Virginia judges should use the 60- and 120-day periods of confinement currently allowed in law rather than imposing the suspended sentence for the more serious conviction. These shorter incarceration sanctions should also be utilized for people on parole supervision who are not convicted of a new felony offense.
- **Eliminate supervision fees.** People on probation and parole are required to pay unaffordable monthly fees along with "user fees" for drug testing, electronic monitoring, and other mandatory supervision conditions. These legal financial obligations are an unjust economic burden on those least able to afford them and create a significant barrier to success for many people on supervision. Failure to pay supervision fees can also result in costly revocations that only make it harder for the person to find a job and pay the outstanding debt after incarceration. West Virginia should eliminate these fees moving forward and forgive existing court debt related to unpaid supervision fees.

30 House Bill 2038 is available: <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?211+sum+HB2038>.

- **Adopt presumptive probation for misdemeanor and nonviolent felony convictions.** Judges in West Virginia have wide discretion to decide whether a person is sentenced to prison and for how long. Probation is used far less frequently than in other states and policymakers should adopt a presumptive probation policy that requires judges to impose a probation sentence unless the court finds incarceration is merited due to aggravating circumstances and documents the public safety risk on the record.
- **Allow people to earn time off supervision if they are successful in the community.** West Virginia should adopt an earned discharge policy and award earned time credits to people who follow the rules of supervision, allowing them to earn one month off their probation sentence or parole term for every month they do not violate the conditions of supervision. Earned discharge is an evidence-based policy that incentivizes compliance with supervision conditions and allows probation and parole agencies to focus on the people who need the most support to be successful.
- **Increase funding for community-based treatment programs.** The funding provided by Senate Bill 371 is a fraction of what is needed to meet the housing, employment, and substance use disorder and mental health treatment needs of people who have contact with the criminal justice system. West Virginia should use the savings from reduced incarceration that will result from the above policies and invest them in community-based programs that lessen the need for criminal justice interventions.
- **Improve data collection and reporting on probation and parole revocations and the use of 60- and 120-day periods of confinement.** Senate Bill 371 requires the state to publish an annual report on the implementation and outcomes of the supervision reforms and treatment programs funded as part of the Justice Reinvestment Act. In the eight years this annual report has been published, the state has yet to report the rate of revocations and successful completions for people on supervision or provide any data on the availability or effectiveness of community-based treatment programs.
- **Ensure the quality implementation of reforms adopted last legislative session.** In 2021, the West Virginia Legislature passed House Bill 3304 and House Bill 3078 which authorized the West Virginia Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation to establish reentry and transitional housing and work release programs to increase the number of people who are eligible for parole and improve their chances of success once released. These programs must be implemented in an effective and timely manner to positively impact parole grant rates and successful reintegration into the community.

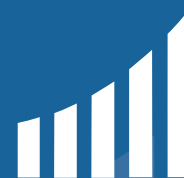
About the Author

Brian Elderbroom is the founder and president of Justice Reform Strategies, a consulting firm providing policy, communications, and management support to organizations committed to improving the criminal justice system. He is a national expert on sentencing and corrections policy with more than 17 years of experience helping states adopt and evaluate reforms to reduce jail, prison, and community supervision populations. He previously worked on the Justice Reinvestment Initiative at the Pew Charitable Trusts and Urban Institute, where he remains an affiliated scholar.

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