

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.acluohio.org/en/news/why-are-our-prisons-so-overcrowded-asks-lawmaker-he-votes-sentence-enhancement-bill>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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I wish this was a satirical headline published by The Onion. But its something we actually see and hear in the halls of the Statehouse from the officials we Ohioans have elected to represent us.

Because of policy decisions, our states incarceration rate has more than quadrupled since 1970. Like clockwork, at the beginning of each new session legislators [talk](#) a big [talk](#) about reform. But [talk](#) is cheap. Instead, year after year our legislators instead pass dozens of bills that take us in the opposite direction. In fact, our lobbyist counted each and every piece of legislation that flies in the face of criminal justice reform, and produced [our new report on Ohio's Statehouse-to-Prison Pipeline](#).

That is eight solid years of ignoring the problem. Eight solid years of children and families with loved ones in prison who shouldnt be there. All while the system is housing 10,000 people over capacity.

This past session legislators introduced a whopping 137 bills - 12% of all bills introduced - that contained provisions to send more people to prison or jail. Of those 137 bills, 22 became law.

Legislators must stop the continuous pipeline of bills that put more and more people behind bars.

And, in addition to no longer introducing any bills that create new crimes or place additional penalties into state law, our leaders must push for common-sense, *retroactive* reforms that will affect the 49,000 Ohioans sitting in cages today.

The time to tinker with our prison system is over, and it has been for decades.

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