

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.acluohio.org/en/press-releases/proposed-new-crimes-and-penalties-undermine-legislatures-criminal-justice-reform>

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COLUMBUS A new ACLU of Ohio report, issued today, finds that Ohio legislators introduced nearly 100 bills in the last legislative session to send more people to already overcrowded prisons and jails. The report, *Ohios Statehouse-to-Prison Pipeline 2017*, highlights that the Ohio General Assembly is damaging their own multi-year effort to simplify the criminal code by lengthening prison and jail sentences and proposing new criminal offenses.

This should be a wake-up call for legislators, says Gary Daniels, chief lobbyist of the ACLU of Ohio. We can't expect criminal justice reform to succeed if legislators are constantly funneling more people into an already overflowing statehouse-to-prison pipeline. The report identifies that one in nine bills in the House and one in 15 bills in the Senate contained some form of sentencing enhancement.

We need to focus on what's gone terribly wrong with our criminal justice system, said Daniels. Mass incarceration is ruining lives, neighborhoods and communities, especially for people of color. Until the Recodification Committee finishes its work, there should be no more bills that add new crimes or penalties, continued Daniels.

The report, *Ohios Statehouse-to-Prison Pipeline 2017*, calls for a series of reforms, including a freeze on sentence enhancements, at least until the work of the Ohio Criminal Justice Recodification Committee is completed later this session.

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The report is available at www.acluohio.org/statehouse-to-prison-2017.

[Read our 2015 report.](#)

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