



# Reclaiming Disconnected Youths: Uniting Left and Right for America's Future



*Youth Transition Funders  
Group Connected by 25  
Conference  
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# Introduction

- **TPPF Mission: Individual Responsibility, Free Enterprise, Limited Government, Private Property Rights**
- **We apply these foundational principles to criminal justice, bringing together stakeholders and working with allies across the political spectrum.**



# The Texas Model for Reform



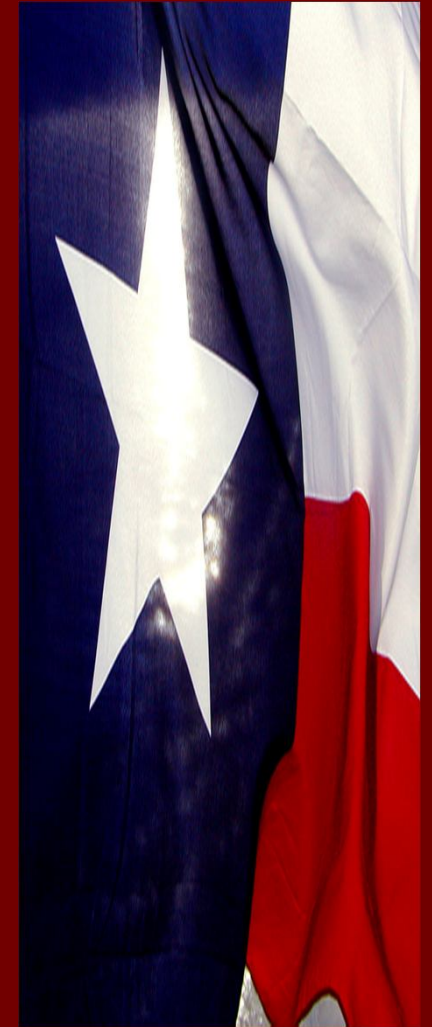
# Texas Juvenile Justice Reform: Thinking Outside the Cell

- In 2007, lawmakers gave counties \$57.8 million to handle youth misdemeanants on probation who previously would have been sent to state lockups at twice the cost.
- A 2009 budget provision allows counties that agree to reduce commitments to state lockups to receive a share of the state's savings for local, research-based programs with performance measures.



# Texas Juvenile Justice Reform: Less Incarceration & Less Crime

- The number of youths incarcerated at state lockups is about a third of the total in 2006 and the number of youths in county lockups has remained steady.
- Juvenile crime in Texas has continually declined, falling 10.3% in the 2009 fiscal year and dropping further in major metro areas in 2010.



# Momentum is Building on the Right for Criminal Justice Reform

## Governors Pushing Reforms Include:

- Bobby Jindal (LA)
- Mitch Daniels (IN)
- Robert Scott (FL)
- Robert Bentley (AL)
- John Kasich (OH)
- Mike Beebe (AK)
- Nathan Deal (GA)



# Getting Criminal Justice Right

- Gov. Reagan in 1971: "Our rehabilitation policies and improved parole system are attracting nationwide attention. Fewer parolees are being returned to prison than at any time in our history, and our prison population is lower than at any time since 1963."
- Cut parole re-offending from 40% to 25% with lower caseloads than in recent years.





**Conservatives  
Latch on to Prison  
Reform**

January 28, 2011



**Right on Crime Noted  
in “Budget Crunch  
Forces New Approach  
to Prisons”**

February 15, 2011



***National Review*  
Praises Right on  
Crime**

February 21, 2011



# Conservative Leaders Weigh In

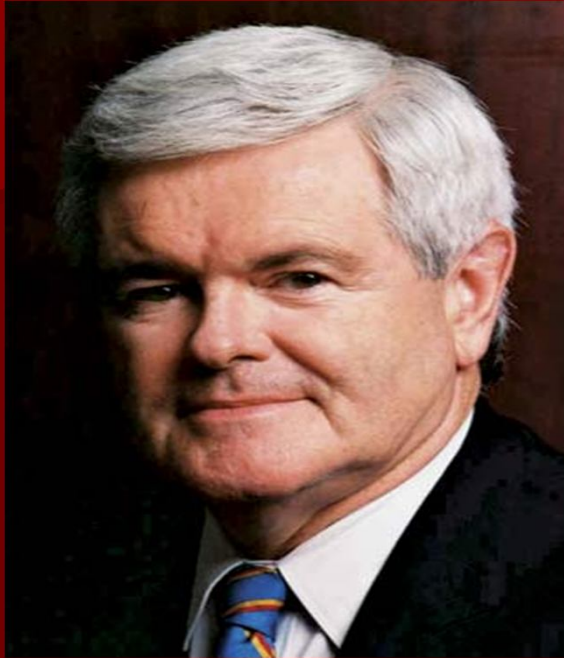
- Speaker Newt Gingrich, Drug Czar Bill Bennett, A.G. Ed Meese, Grover Norquist, and Other Conservative Leaders Endorse Right on Crime Statement of Principles
- Statement Supports Cost-Effective Alternatives for Nonviolent Offenders, Emphasis on Restitution and Treatment, and Performance Measures and Incentives to Move from a System That Grows When it Fails to One That Rewards Results



Grover Norquist,  
President, *Americans for  
Tax Reform*

# Speaker Gingrich Speaks Out

*Op-ed by Newt Gingrich & Mark Earley, Atlanta Journal-Constitution, March 23, 2010*



- **“If two-thirds of public school students dropped out, or two-thirds of all bridges built collapsed within three years, would citizens tolerate it? The people of Georgia would never stand for that kind of failure. But that is exactly what is happening all across the U.S. in our prison systems.**

**Last year, some 20,000 people were released from Georgia's prisons to re-enter our communities. If trends of the past decade continue, two-thirds of them will be rearrested within three years. That failure rate is a clear and present threat to public safety. Not only is this revolving door a threat to public safety, but it results in an increasing burden on each and every taxpayer.”**

# Conservative Commentator Cal Thomas vs. Juvenile Life Without Parole

- *Cal Thomas, former Vice President of the Moral Majority and Fox News commentator, November 2009 syndicated column:*

“Perhaps if we focused more on redemption, rather than detention, the results would be different. ... Over the years we’ve managed to get the punishment part right, but what about the redemption part? Prisoners have few advocates and often feel abandoned and without hope. Clearly there must be a better way when the number of incarcerated grows every year, along with the cost of warehousing them in places that serve as hot houses of despair and training academies for hardened criminals.”

# Conservative Commentator Cal Thomas vs. Juvenile Life Without Parole

"...In 22 states plus the District of Columbia, children as young as seven can be prosecuted and tried in adult court, where they would be subjected to harsh adult sanctions, including long prison terms, mandatory sentences, and placement in adult prison. Surely this is cruel and unusual punishment for all but the most violent and psychotic killers. One size fits all sentencing doesn't and it shouldn't. Isn't it better to attempt to reclaim children who are headed in the wrong direction than to doom them to life in prison without parole? I think it is."



# Finding the Right Intersection: How Our Agenda Appeals to 8 Core Conservative Values



# 1) Prioritizing Public Safety

- Research has shown alternatives such as in-home programs utilizing evidence-based practices such as functional family therapy and multi-systemic therapy and Missouri-style group homes more effectively reduce recidivism than incarceration youths in large, remote facilities.
- Putting youngsters in adult lockups increases recidivism.



## 2) Limiting Government Spending

- Locking up juveniles costs from \$130,000 per year in Texas state facilities to \$226,000 per year in New York City juvenile detention.
- If a first-time youth offender goes on to a life of crime, societal cost will be \$2 to \$3 million.
- Must identify percent of adult prison inmates who dropped out or were pushed out of school and/or were in juvenile system.



### 3) The Restitution Principle and Giving Victims a Voice

- Restitution is the core principle of criminal justice in the Bible and nearly every major religious tradition.
- Conservatives tend to support the primacy of the individual, emphasizing the harm to a specific victim and rejecting notion of “repaying debt to society” by going to jail.





# The Victims' Perspective

## *Survey of Iowa Burglary Victims*

Sanction	Percent Requesting
Restitution	81.4%
Community Service	75.7%
Pay Fine	74.3%
Regular Probation	68.6%
Treatment/Rehabilitation	53.5%
Intensive Probation	43.7%
Short Jail Term	41.4%
Boot Camp	40.0%
Work Release Facility	34.3%
Prison Sentence Year or More	7.1%

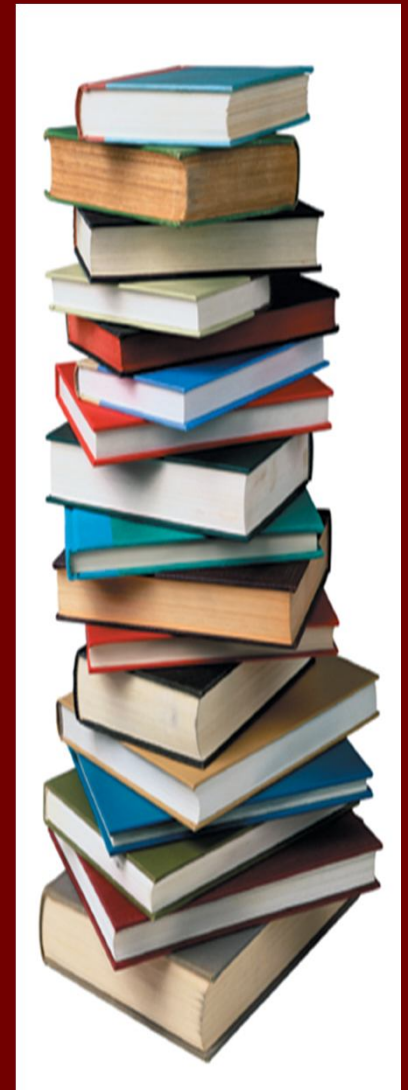
# Making Victims Whole

- Victims often pay twice: once for the crime and once for the time.
- Probationers pay \$391 million in restitution (at least 34 times more per offender than inmates) and do 135 million service hours.
- Victim mediation: 14 states with statutes. Must be chosen by victim & offender. Proven to increase victim satisfaction as a result of apology and completion of restitution in 89% of cases. Most studies find less re-offending than with the adversarial process.



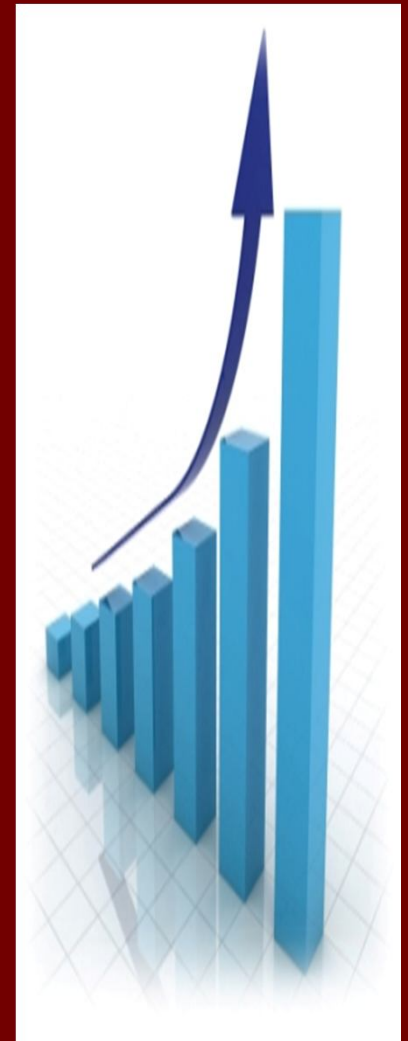
## 4) Individual Liberty & Limited Government

- Too many criminal laws and enhancements – more than 1,700 in Texas, including 11 felonies relating to oysters.
- Passed law to stop 10 year-olds from getting a ticket for chewing gum, but hundreds of thousands ticketed for disrupting class.
- After Columbine, Texas repealed law prohibiting suspension as a penalty for truancy.



## 5) Accountability

- Must demand outcome-oriented performance measures for the criminal justice system just as we do for other government programs.
- In education, there is rightfully a focus on “teacher quality” but not a single google result for “probation officer quality.”
- In addition to recidivism, must look at positive benchmarks such as educational advancement, employment, and victim satisfaction.



## 6) Efficiency

- For example, some elements of JDAI are simply common sense changes to the processing of youths to minimize unnecessary detention time.
- Better information sharing across juvenile justice, education, child welfare, and mental health systems can promote coordination in service delivery and enhance allocation of resources by reducing duplication, such as performing the same assessment or home visit twice.



## 7) Centrality of the Family

- Emphasize juvenile justice and child welfare strategies that keep the family intact. For example, some mothers can be given treatment for an addiction that is causing neglect that obviates the need for removal.
- Truancy program in Fort Bend County, Texas sends school employee to help rather than issuing a citation to the parent. They provided clothing in a case where student skipped because they had nothing to wear.



## 8) Flexibility for States to Innovate vs. One-Size-Fits-All Mandates

- Child Florida, Los Angeles, Alameda County, and other jurisdictions have achieved success with federal child welfare waivers that de-link funding from the number of out-of-home placements and invest in broader array of strategies such as early intervention.
- Federal sex offender registry, including lifetime registration for juveniles, interferes with more rational state registries and several are rejecting it.



# What's Not Conservative

- Writing a blank check for building prisons while zeroing out everything that reduces the actual or perceived need for prisons.
- A government so big and intrusive that it stamps a scarlet letter on youths for the rest of their lives, interfering with their ability to access the free market for education and employment.



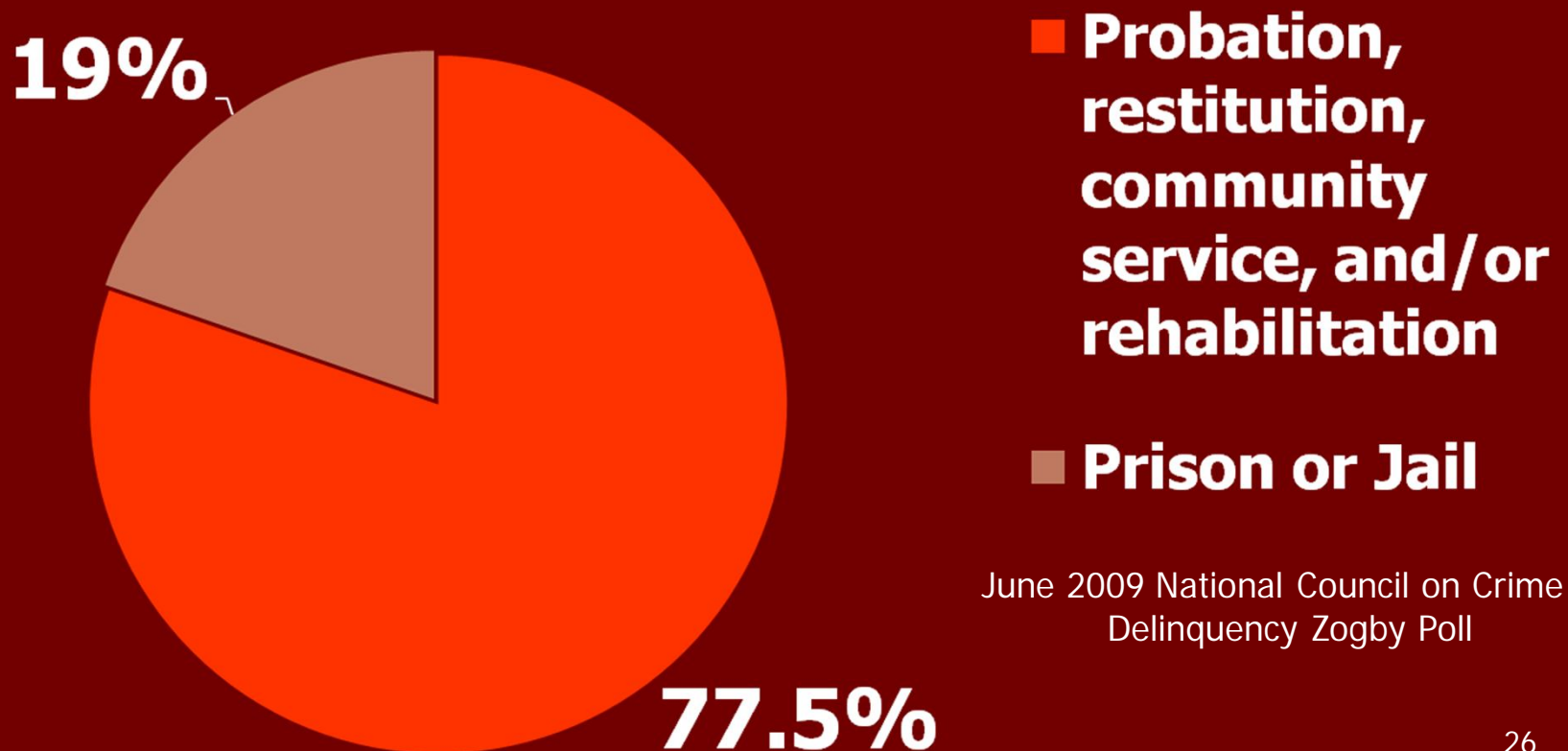


# Public Demands Balanced Approach That is Tough *and* Smart on Crime



# Use Prison Wisely

What do voters think is the most appropriate sentence for a nonviolent, nonsexual offender whose crime did not involve significant property loss (less than \$400)?



June 2009 National Council on Crime & Delinquency Zogby Poll

# Consensus is Building for Reform

- IL.: 62% for drug treatment vs. 25% for more prisons & penalties
- TX.: 83% for treatment vs. prison for low-level possession
- FL Right on Crime Poll: 79% of conservatives say alternatives to prison for nonviolent offenders is being tough on crime
- MI: 78% oppose sending 14 to 16 year-olds to adult prisons



# Taking the Next Steps



# How TPPF & Right on Crime Can Help

- Equip policymakers with research
- Develop and promote reforms
- Take the case to the public and the media
- Work with key allies across spectrum



# How TPPF & Right on Crime Can Help

- Provide technical support to other groups, including fellow free-market think tanks in the State Policy Network that are in all 50 states.
- Leverage our prominent signers of the Right on Crime Statement of Principles to help elected officials summon the courage to make policy based on evidence, not emotion.



# Conclusion: It's Time to Unite the Left and Right Behind Enlightened Policies to Reclaim America's Youth

