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Crime and Justice News

Georgia Touts Technology Use To Cut Parole Revocations, Recidivism

May 1, 2014 07:47:47 am

One good way to save money on prisons may be more spending on technology, experts and legislators told a Texas Public Policy Foundation panel this week, the Texas Tribune reports. In light of Georgia's success using new technologies in parole and probation, the foundation—a conservative Austin-based think tank—is urging Texas to follow suit. Reforming the methods of community supervision for nonviolent offenders, they said, could reduce incarceration costs and recidivism. Georgia uses a voice recognition technology that allows low-risk offenders to check in with their parole officers through self-reporting. The eliminated parole offices in favor of virtual workspaces.

With the technology, along with GPS monitoring and increasing the amount of time officers spent with their cases because they no longer have physical offices, parolees were much less likely to be revoked to prison or arrested for a new offense. Ninety-seven percent of offenders supervised under voice recognition successfully completed parole and those under cell phone-based GPS electronic monitoring were 89 to 95 percent less likely to be revoked. "The offenders are one of the biggest advocates of our system," said Michael Nail of the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles. "They feel that they now have a stronger relationship with their parole officers." Nail said that in the three years since implementing the reforms, which also included conducting parole hearings via teleconference, parole officers increased contact with offenders by 22 percent. A report on Georgia was issued by Marc Levin and Vikrant Reddy of the foundation's Center for Effective Justice.

[Click here to read more \(http://www.texastribune.org/2014/04/29/lawmakers-urged-reform-criminal-justice-technology/\)](http://www.texastribune.org/2014/04/29/lawmakers-urged-reform-criminal-justice-technology/)

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