



Criminal Justice Reform: Ending the New Jim Crow Task Force Supporting New Jersey Bail Reform

BAIL REFORM FACT SHEET

- Nearly three-quarters of the 15,000 people in state jails are awaiting trial. Almost 40% of those held in New Jersey jails are there solely for an inability to pay bail. Over 10% of those cannot pay bail mounting to \$2,500 or less (800+ inmates can't pay even \$500).
- Most are imprisoned on non-violent charges and largely on drug violations and disproportionately the large majority are people of color and Hispanic.
- Defendants without the means to pay bail typically spend ten or more months in jail before having his or her day in court, putting the lie two of the basic tenets of our judicial system: the right to a speedy trial and innocent before proven guilty.
- The cost to the tax payer for warehousing an individual awaiting trial is estimated to be \$100 per day or approximately \$30,000 a year, a sum far greater than the \$500 or \$2,500 bail for which a person awaiting trial is being held.
- Uncertainty and despair leave inmates vulnerable to a plea bargain resulting in a conviction of a felony even if released with time served. The worst outcome of a plea bargain is the label of convicted felon with the far reaching negative consequences and ramifications.
- The emotional and psychological price, as well as the financial impact, to these disenfranchised members of our society is immeasurable.
- The New Jersey Bail Reform Act, among other things, will provide alternatives to monetary bail for non-violent, low-risk prisoners. It will strengthen families and communities by allowing low-risk individuals to remain with their families, keep their jobs, and get connected to services, pending trial.

This kind of Bail Reform has already been adopted in other States and on a Federal level.

Support Bail Reform Senate Bill 946 / Assembly Bill 1910. Sign support letters to Assembly Speaker Prieto and Senate President Sweeney.

May 2014