

Our country faces a vicious cycle of poverty, criminality, and incarceration that traps too many Americans and weakens too many communities. There are 2.2 million people behind bars in America today, compared to 500,000 just 30 years ago. The United States has less than five percent of the world's population but over 25 percent of the world's prisoners. Every year, we spend \$80 billion to keep people locked up.

This topic isn't new – the President has talked about the unfairness of much of the criminal justice system since his time in the Senate. The President has traveled the country and met with Americans who are working to fix the criminal justice system, from law enforcement officials working to lower the crime and incarceration rates, to former prisoners who are earning their second chance. And he promised to continue to work with Congress to pass meaningful criminal justice reform that makes the system cost-effective, fairer, and smarter, while enhancing the ability of law enforcement to keep our communities safe.

Since taking office, the Administration has worked to enhance fairness and efficiency at all phases of the criminal justice system, including the President signing the Fair Sentencing Act, the Department of Justice launching the Smart on Crime initiative, and the creation of the Task Force on 21st Century Policing. Read more about actions President Obama has taken to reform the criminal justice system.