

ALLIANCE FOR SAFETY AND JUSTICE



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CONTACT: Jennifer Laudano
703-728-0406
Jennifer@safeandjust.org

IL TAKES IMPORTANT FIRST STEP BY PASSING BIPARTISAN CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM BILL

The following statement is from Lenore Anderson, President of the [Alliance for Safety and Justice](#) regarding the newly passed legislation:

“The nation has been watching the state of Illinois struggle with an increase in prison expenditures, an increase in violence in Chicago, and an increase in the number of victims needing treatment and trauma recovery. This week, state leaders from both sides of the political aisle took action to address these critical issues.

“The Neighborhood Safety Act establishes a pilot trauma recovery program for crime victims to address chronic trauma and help stop the cycle of crime; incentivizes offenders to rehabilitate themselves through completion of life skills, job training, and mental and substance abuse treatment; and provides judicial discretion for certain sentencing decisions. Research shows that probation is often more effective than prison, and incarceration can actually increase recidivism for low-risk individuals.

“There is broad support for these policies among crime victims in the state. Through a [statewide survey](#) of crime victims, we found that seven in 10 victims prefer a more balanced approach to public safety – shorter prison sentences and greater investments in prevention, rehabilitation and trauma recovery for victims to stop the cycle of crime. We also found that nearly one in three Illinois residents have been victimized in the past 10 years, with more than half of these crime survivors experiencing violence, but that impact is not evenly felt across the state. The study found that residents of Chicago are 23 percent more likely to be victims of violent crime and 41 percent more likely to be victims of serious violent crime than the rest of the state.

“These findings are consistent with what we see across the country. Crime victims want to stop the cycle of violence through change at the community level. To achieve real safety, states like Illinois need to continue to shift spending from prisons to treatment and rehabilitation and develop more balanced strategies for addressing trauma and supporting victim recovery.

“Representative Jehan Gordon-Booth (D-92), State Senator Kwame Raoul (D-13), Republican House Leader Jim Durkin (R-82) and Representative Chad Hays (R-104) showed great leadership in shepherding this legislation. They serve as a great example of what can be accomplished when legislators work together, across party lines, to tackle critical issues. The Alliance for Safety and Justice was honored to work alongside these state leaders and look forward to our continued work together.”

Alliance for Safety and Justice is a national organization that aims to win new safety priorities in states across the country. We partner with state leaders, advocates and crime survivors to advance policies to replace prison waste with new safety priorities that will help the communities most harmed by crime and violence. For more information visit www.allianceforsafetyandjustice.org or follow us on twitter [@SafeandJustUSA](https://twitter.com/SafeandJustUSA)

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