

JUSTICE REINVESTMENT INITIATIVE (JRI)

South Carolina

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Between 1984 and 2009, South Carolina’s prison population nearly tripled, and in 2009, it was projected to increase 13 percent more over the next five years at a cost of \$458 million. With technical assistance through JRI, the state enacted SB 1154 in 2010 to protect public safety, improve accountability, and control corrections costs. South Carolina reengaged in JRI in 2017 to build on progress and further improve returns on corrections spending, but, as yet, had not passed legislation.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Through SB 1154, South Carolina:

Implemented Evidence-Based Community Supervision Strategies that Improved Success Rates and Reduced Recidivism

Supervision reforms including the use of risk and needs assessments, administrative sanctions, and earned discharge incentives contributed to a 16 percentage-point increase in successful completions for people on probation and a 58 percent decline in revocations between 2010 and 2018.

Recidivism for people placed on probation fell from 28 percent in 2007 to 19 percent in 2014.

Between 2010 and 2018, the number of supervisees revoked for compliance violations who were subsequently admitted to the South Carolina Department of Corrections declined by 59 percent.

An Urban Institute analysis found that, controlling for demographic and case-specific variables, people who started their supervision terms after reform were less likely to recidivate than those who started before 2010.

Focused Prison Space on People Convicted of Serious Offenses

Sentencing and parole reforms contributed to an 18 percentage-point increase in the proportion of people incarcerated for violent offenses and a 22.5 percent decline in the state’s overall prison population between 2009 and 2018.

Recidivism for people released from prison fell from 34 percent in 2007 to 25 percent for those released in 2015.

Between 2012 and 2017, South Carolina closed six prisons and saved nearly \$500 million with no increase in crime.

LASTING IMPACT OF JRI

JRI reforms in South Carolina reduced recidivism, averted nearly half a billion dollars in corrections costs, and promoted economic development.

South Carolina was an early JRI state: it passed and implemented a comprehensive package of reforms in 2010, and results have been impressive. The state has seen a steady and significant decline in recidivism both for people released from prison and those on probation as well as a notable increase in successful probation completions. Reforms helped the state save or avert almost \$500 million in corrections costs with no increase in crime. In addition, South Carolina is one of the only states to study the economic impact of JRI reforms. An economist at Clemson University concluded in a study that JRI sentencing reforms generated nearly 1,000 additional jobs and a \$25 million increase in the state’s gross product in the first two fiscal years after reform¹.

SAVINGS/REINVESTMENT

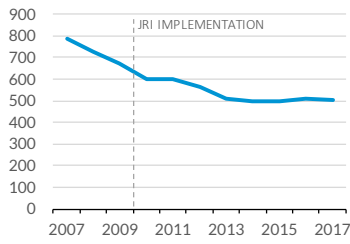
Savings/averted costs	State JRI investment
\$491,000,000	\$0

Source: The Pew Charitable Trusts. September 2017. Data Trends: South Carolina Criminal Justice Reform.

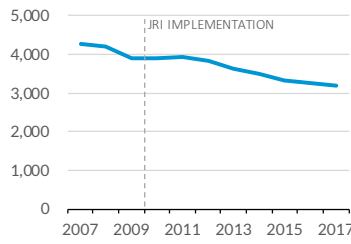
¹ Hughes, David W. 2014. “Economic Impact of Sentencing Reform Act Initiatives on the South Carolina Economy.” Columbia: South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services.

Violent and Property Crime Rates, 2007–17

Violent Crime Rates
Rate per 100,000



Property Crime Rates
Rate per 100,000



Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reporting Program (2007–2017).

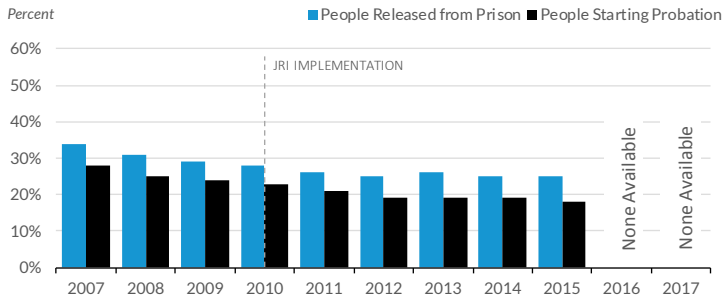


Violent crime rates were declining before JRI and continued to decline after reform.



Property crime rates were declining before JRI and continued to decline after reform.

Recidivism Rate: Incarceration or Reincarceration within Three Years

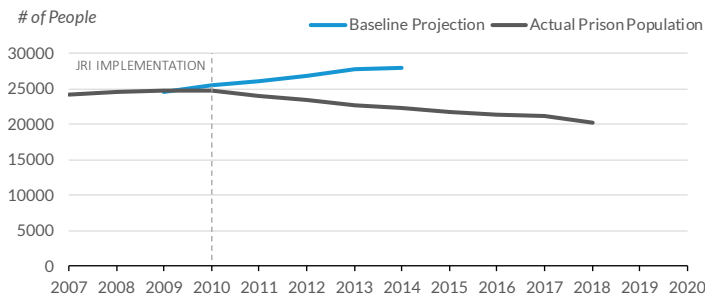


Sources: South Carolina Return to Prison Rates of Inmates Released FY1993-FY 2015; South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services Accountability Report Series 2010-2018.



Between 2007 and 2015, recidivism rates declined for people released from prison and those placed on probation.

Prison Population

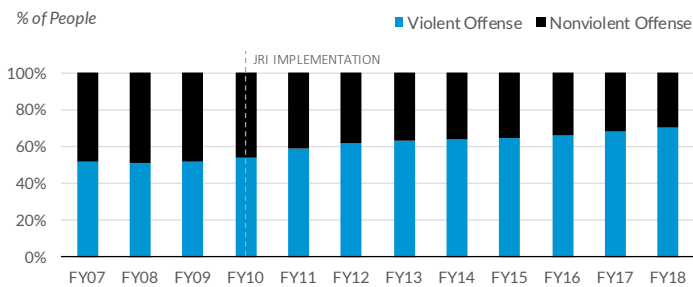


Sources: South Carolina Department of Corrections, "Average Daily Inmate Population Fiscal Years 1970-2018"; Baseline projection calculated by Applied Research Services.



In 2014, there were 5,600 fewer people in South Carolina prisons than projected before reform, and the population continued to decline through 2018.

Prison Composition



Source: South Carolina Department of Corrections "SCDC FAQs, Profile of Inmates in Institutional Count With Current Violent Offense".
Note: Reflects the count on June 30 of each year.



South Carolina is focusing prison space on people convicted of serious offenses. In 2018, 70 percent of people in prison were there for a violent offense, up from 52 percent in 2009.

*The data in this summary describe trends and provide additional context on system changes pre- and post-reform. Indicators shown here track high-level changes in state justice systems and do not necessarily demonstrate the impact of any specific reform, including JRI policy and practice changes. Visit urbn.is/JRI to see detailed sources for information in this fact sheet.