

Educate Don't Incarcerate Campaign

SB 704 (Sen. Lightford) / HB 1779 (Rep. Welch)

Addressing The Unnecessary School-Based Arrests On K-12 Students

Many schools across the states have simply become overly reliant on law enforcement personnel to handle routine school disciplinary matters. Behaviors that are regularly addressed through other means in schools with little or no police presence are resulting in arrests and court hearings for students.

SB 704 / HB 1779 Will:

1. Limit school-based arrests to truly serious offenses that threaten school safety
2. Create a grant program for school districts that reallocate funding for school-based law enforcement personnel to strategies for promoting school safety and healthy learning environments such as restorative justice programs and increased use of psychologists, social workers, and other mental and behavioral health specialists.

For more information, contact Maria Degillo, VOYCE Coordinator at maria@voyceproject.org or 773-583-1387

Reimagine Justice Illinois Campaign

SB 1886 (Sen. Hutchinson- Sen. Van Pelt)

Decriminalizing Poverty, Increasing Opportunity & Safety

Over the past 30 years we have invested heavily in our criminal justice system to address not only public safety issues but also public health concerns such as the effects of poverty, mental illness, and drug use, and this has led Illinois to having one of the most overcrowded prisons in the country.

SB 1886 would:

1. **Reclassification** – Personal drug use is best addressed through public health strategies, not through the harmful, wasteful, and ineffective approach of incarcerating drug users in state prisons. The bill would make simple possession of all such controlled substances a misdemeanor, while leaving intact the higher penalties for “possession with intent to deliver.”
2. **Retroactivity** – To help put Illinoisans back in the workforce, the bill would make the changes described above retroactive thereby removing barriers to jobs, education, and housing for thousands of Illinois residents. Individuals would also be eligible to have their felony convictions designated as misdemeanors by petitioning the courts.
3. **Reinvestment** – The bill would create a Justice Reinvestment Fund under which 85% of costs avoided due to reclassification (minus administrative costs) would be distributed to counties on a proportionate basis for efforts such as employment and job training programs; drug treatment services; mental health services; trauma recovery services for crime victims; afterschool programs; pre-K programs; summer and year-round jobs for youth; housing opportunities; and community economic development projects. Funds would be targeted toward the communities most affected by crime, violence, and incarceration within each county, and an annual impact assessment will be conducted.

Reimagine Justice Illinois Campaign

HB3337 (Rep. Sims)

A Solution for Illinois To Decriminalize Crimes of Poverty

Many states in the U.S. have raised their felony thresholds for property theft offenses in recent years, including Texas, which increased its amount to \$2,500 in 2015.

Our Illinois theft felony thresholds have remained the same for decades, without any adjustments for inflation. As a result, a far greater percentage of these non-violent crimes now qualify as felonies and contribute to our mass expenditure in our criminal justice system.

HB 3337 would:

1. Set the felony threshold at \$2,000 for theft and retail theft; meaning theft offenses under \$2,000 would be a misdemeanor.
2. Provides that an enhancement from a misdemeanor to a felony based on a prior conviction must only be for felony theft.
3. Maintain a felony theft if the theft was committed in a school or place of worship or if the theft was of governmental property.

For more information, contact Evelin Rodriguez, Reimagine Justice Illinois Coordinator, at Evelin@communitiesunited.org or (773) 543-7616.