**THE CONSERVATIVE CASE FOR CORRECTIONS REFORM**

The winning argument for Texas was that the cost of reducing our low-risk prison populations by investing in community programs was much less expensive than building new prisons. We were not decreasing public safety, but were diverting offenders that the public would generally agree should be treated to programs, rather than wasting their taxpayer dollars. We are called the Department of Corrections – we should be correcting behavior.

 – **Jerry Madden, former State Representative, Texas**

“In this whole thing, nobody is being soft on crime. … The system has a very strong tendency to change them [offenders] for the worse. Everybody knows that, I think. Our current system is fundamentally immoral.”

 – **Chris Cannon, former U.S. Representative, Utah**

“I believe we can take an approach to crime that is both tough and smart. … [T]here are thousands of non-violent offenders in the system whose future we cannot ignore. Let’s focus more resources on rehabilitating those offenders so we can ultimately spend less money locking them up again.”

— **Rick Perry, Governor of Texas**

“The biggest problem from the perspective of the taxpayer, however, is that mandatory minimum sentencing policies have proven prohibitively expensive. In 2008, American taxpayers spent over $5.4 billion on federal prisons, a 925 percent increase since 1982. This explosion in costs is driven by the expanded use of prison sentences for drug crimes and longer sentences required by mandatory minimums. Drug offenders are the largest category of offenders entering federal prisons each year. One third of all individuals sentenced in federal courts each year are drug offenders. And these convicts are getting long sentences. In 2008, more than two-thirds of all drug offenders receive a mandatory minimum sentence, with most receiving a ten-year minimum. … The benefits, if any, of mandatory minimum sentences do not justify this burden to taxpayers. Illegal drug use rates are relatively stable, not shrinking. It appears that mandatory minimums have become a sort of poor man’s Prohibition: a grossly simplistic and ineffectual government response to a problem that has been around longer than our government itself. Viewed through the skeptical eye I train on all other government programs, I have concluded that mandatory minimum sentencing policies are not worth the high cost to America’s taxpayers.”

 –**Grover Norquist, Americans for Tax Reform**

“Without education, job skills, and other basic services, offenders are likely to repeat the same steps that brought them to jail in the first place. This not only affects the offender, but families and our communities as well. This is a problem that needs to be addressed head-on. We cannot say we are doing everything we can to keep our communities and our families safe if we are not addressing the high rate at which offenders are becoming repeat criminals. By implementing this reentry program, we can curb the cycle of repeat offenders and thereby reduce the burden on our prisons and help offenders create a place in society that adds value to their lives while keeping our communities safe for our families.”

 – ***Bobby Jindal, Governor of Louisiana***