

Gov. Pritzker, Lt. Gov. Stratton Announce Key Criminal Justice Reform Priorities

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CHICAGO – Building on the success of their first-year legislative agenda, Governor JB Pritzker and Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton announced three key priorities to reform Illinois’ criminal justice system over the coming years during a fireside chat at Kennedy King College in Chicago’s Englewood neighborhood.

The Governor and Lieutenant Governor spoke about the need to end the cash bail system, reform low-level drug crime sentences while focusing on substance abuse treatment programs, and reduce excessive prison sentences with good time credit and increased opportunities for supervised release.

Altogether, these reforms will have a lasting impact that will improve public safety while improving health outcomes in communities that have been disproportionately impacted.

“In Illinois today, we spend \$1.4 billion a year to hold 40,000 individuals in an overcrowded prison system that has proven itself too expensive, too punitive and too ineffective at fulfilling its purpose: keeping Illinois families safe,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “Already, my administration has taken action to shape a more just criminal justice system. But we can’t rest on our laurels. There is so much more work that needs to be done to ensure our state continues to be a beacon of justice for the nation.”

“Our work around justice reform must be done through the lens of equity and opportunity,” said Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton. “As we move forward, Governor Pritzker and I will work to expand opportunities so fewer people in our state enter the criminal justice system in the first place.”

On January 1, 2020, the Justice, Equity and Opportunity Initiative — spearheaded by Lt. Gov. Stratton — submitted its annual report to the governor. In the report, the JEO highlighted its efforts from the past year to conduct listening sessions with over 500 stakeholders who represent community organizations, advocacy groups, law enforcement, state agencies and legislators from across the state. In 2020, the JEO will work on addressing the social determinants of crime and incarceration, improving equitable deflection and diversion opportunities from the justice system, improving conditions and addressing the needs of vulnerable populations in correctional facilities

and supporting positive reentry outcomes to reduce recidivism. The full report is attached.

The Justice, Equity and Opportunity Initiative was established by Gov. Pritzker last February through Executive Order 19-3.