



December 19, 2014

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your support in 2014! Whether you made a donation, attended a community meeting or the CAPPs Legislative day, called or visited a legislator, your efforts mattered. **We are writing to ask you to continue supporting CAPPs's work in 2015.**

With your help, **we played a significant role in shaping the sentencing and parole reforms debated by the legislature in the last year.** We provided data analysis, cost estimates, case histories and proposed legislative language. **Your donations also makes it possible to work directly with legislators,** as foundations do not fund lobbying activities.

Barbara Levine, CAPPs associate director for research and public policy, authored a pair of new reports regarding the parole review process for Michigan's 850 parole eligible lifers. A statement by 27 former corrections officials supporting reform of the parole review process for parolable lifers accompanied the reports. This December, CAPPs issued a new report, *Paroling people who committed serious crimes: What is the actual risk?* The report finds that people convicted of assaultive and sex offenses have very low re-offense rates. It shows that continuing their incarceration long after they have become eligible for parole is not in the public interest.

The reports and CAPPs's reform proposals generated important media coverage for reform. CAPPs's op eds were published at critical junctures in the public debate – including one recently co-authored with the Mackinac Center for Public Policy.

CAPPs takes on some of the toughest criminal justice policy issues and our victories do not come easily. CAPPs was deeply involved in the reform process spearheaded by the Council of State Governments. We spent many hours helping to shape a bill that would increase the number of paroles granted as soon as people became eligible. Unfortunately, HB 5931 was amended by the House to the point where it could do more harm than good. While disappointed that the parole reform bill stalled, the debate on parole reform moved further ahead than ever before. The legislature did create a Criminal Justice Policy Commission. This commission could help tip the balance toward evidence-based sentencing and parole policies, **if we work to make it happen.**

It is very clear that we will need to be armed with more than facts to win change. We have to continue building a movement for reform.

We made a great start this year. We organized community meetings across the state, held our first legislative day, partnered with many new organizations concerned about Michigan's over-reliance on incarceration, and doubled our mailing list. We also worked hard to keep members more informed and involved through emails, our website and mailings of the new CAPPs UPDATE.

However, we will need your help to expand our work in 2015. Your generous **tax-deductible contribution is essential to building a reform movement that can significantly roll back the prisoner population.** With your help, we will work to win:

- Sentencing reforms that reduce average prison length of stay and sentencing disparities,
- Parole reforms that require release of low risk prisoners when they have served their minimum sentences,
- Parole for medically frail and aging prisoners,
- A reduction in the number of people incarcerated for technical probation and parole violations.

CAPPS must continue fighting harmful new sentencing and parole initiatives, publishing critical analyses of corrections spending, and advocating for increased public investment in services proven to reduce crime, especially in high-incarceration communities.

Your gift will make sure we can continue:

- **Publishing research and developing policy recommendations:** Two more CAPPS reports are currently in the pipeline: one on sentencing and one on elderly and incapacitated prisoners (with the American Friends Service Committee).
- **Direct and grassroots advocacy:** Your contributions fund our work with policymakers. This is especially important in 2015, due to the large number of newly elected legislators who will need to learn about the issues.
- **Organizing support for reform:** We must continue expanding our outreach and education in communities across Michigan. We must also continue working with coalitions spanning a range of interests to build the state and national movement against mass incarceration.
- **Using the media to inform the public and policymakers:** With your help, we will remain a key resource for the media and will also use both “old” and “new” media to inform and mobilize members and partner organizations.

CAPPS has been fighting for 15 years to reduce the prisoner population and the \$2 billion corrections budget. At long last, policymakers are asking what taxpayers are getting for their money.

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to CAPPS today so we can build on the momentum you helped generate. We urge you to consider a monthly sustainer of any amount—just \$10 a month will make a tremendous difference in our ability to continue our work. You can set up a monthly donation through our website at www.capps-mi.org or call (517) 482-7753.

Again, we thank you for your ongoing support and wish you and your family members a happy holiday season.

Yours for justice,



Laura M. Sager, Executive Director

P.S. If you have already made your donation for this year, we thank you!