

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, Sept. 13, 2018

Contact: Kate McCracken
Phone: 517.225.3186
Email: kate@safeandjustmi.org

Safe & Just
Michigan

Governor Snyder Signs Objective Parole Bill into Law

Evidence-based standards will reduce prison population, state budget

LANSING — A new, evidence-based standard for determining parole signed into law by the governor yesterday will save Michigan taxpayers \$40 million annually within five years and reduce the size of Michigan's prison population by 1,800-2,400 beds over the same timeframe. More importantly, it will reunite families, increase economic opportunities and strengthen local economies while ensuring that communities remain safe, making Michigan a better place to live for all families.

Safe & Just Michigan and the Alliance for Safety and Justice were instrumental in guiding the objective parole bill to the governor's desk. Both organizations advocated in support of the bill over a period of several years.

"Objective parole replaces subjective decision-making with an evidence-based process. At the same time, it gives the parole board and the Michigan Department of Corrections more flexibility to deny parole when the evidence warrants," said John Cooper, associate director of policy and research for Safe & Just Michigan. "When the parole process is more consistent and evidence-based, it will result in more people who are ready going home to their families, where they can go back to work and get back to being contributing members of our communities."

Objective parole passed through the Michigan Legislature with overwhelming bipartisan support. It was approved by the House with a vote of 97-10 in May, and by the Senate by a vote of 31-4 in September.

A broad base of organizations voiced support for the bill when it came before House and Senate committee hearings, including 42 North Partners LLC, the ACLU of Michigan, the

Alliance for Safety and Justice, Americans for Prosperity, Business Leaders for Michigan, Christian Coalition of Michigan, Criminal Defense Attorneys of Michigan, Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce, Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, the Mackinac Center, Michigan Catholic Conference, Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency, Michigan Faith in Action, Michigan League for Public Policy, Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce, Still Standing and Talent 2025.

The Alliance for Safety and Justice was particularly instrumental in seeing the objective parole bill signed into law. A recent survey of Michigan crime survivors commissioned by the Alliance for Safety and Justice found that a 77 percent of crime victims want to see incarcerated people who pose a minimal risk to their communities released after they have completed their minimum sentences. The survey showed crime survivors also prefer a balanced approach to public safety — such as greater investments in prevention, community rehabilitation and trauma recovery for victims — over longer prison sentences.

“With this measure, Gov. Snyder, Michigan lawmakers, and law enforcement are demonstrating a clear commitment to public safety, working together with other stakeholders to pursue smart solutions that break cycles of crime, reduce recidivism and improve safety,” said Robert Rooks, vice president of the Alliance for Safety and Justice. “We are honored to work alongside these leaders and look forward to continuing to build a safer Michigan together.”

SJM’s Cooper said he was grateful for the support of Gov. Snyder, Rep. Kesto, Sen. Jones and others to make objective parole a reality.

“It’s rare to see such strong bipartisan support for legislative initiatives anymore, but people from across the aisle came together to pass this bill, which will make a real difference for families and communities across Michigan,” Cooper said. “Safe & Just Michigan hopes we can build on this example and move forward with similar bipartisan support for more evidence-based criminal justice policies that will make our criminal justice system safer and smarter, and our neighborhoods safer for everyone.”

###

Safe & Just Michigan (www.safeandjustmi.org) works to advance policies that end Michigan’s over-use of incarceration and promote community safety and healing. We partner with Michigan organizations and leaders from across the political spectrum, including business and community leaders, faith communities, crime survivor organizations, formerly incarcerated individuals, prisoners and their families, as well as Michigan taxpayers statewide.

Alliance for Safety and Justice (www.allianceforsafetyandjustice.org) is a national organization that aims to win new safety priorities in states across the country. We partner with state leaders, advocates and crime survivors to advance policies to replace prison waste with new safety priorities that will help the communities most harmed by crime and violence.