

# Implementing the Recommendations of the Jails Task Force

In April 2019, Gov. **Gretchen Whitmer**, House Speaker **Lee Chatfield** (R-Levering) and Senate Majority Leader **Mike Shirkey** (R-Clarklake) brought together an incredible bipartisan group of lawmakers, judges, law enforcement officials, activists and directly impacted people to address the problem of jail incarceration. They challenged the group to come up with solutions in a state where the crime rate was in dramatic decline at the same time arrests and jail incarceration continued to increase. The Pew Charitable Trusts provided \$1 million dollars of technical support to this effort.

The Task Force learned, after examining much research and gathering direct experience, that Michigan sends too many people to jail for too long, and that jail admissions often occur for reasons other than public safety. This is important because the impacts of misdemeanor incarceration go far beyond the initial incident and sentence. Incarceration, even for more minor crimes, can impact someone's employment, housing and ability to raise their families in ways that can last a lifetime.

**Ultimately, after much deliberation, they offered the Legislature [18 recommendations for action.](#)**

The first wave of legislation to implement those recommendations was released in June 2020. This first wave of legislation has three goals:

## **Eliminating most driver's license suspensions (not related to public safety):**

[House Bill 5846](#)

[HB 5847](#)

[HB 5848](#)

[HB 5849](#)

[HB 5850](#)

[HB 5851](#)

[HB 5852](#)

## **Eliminating jail mandatory minimums:**

[HB 5854](#)

[HB 5855](#)

[HB 5856](#)

[HB 5857](#)

[HB 5844](#)

## **Removing incarceration in jail as an option for some traffic misdemeanor charges (where nobody was harmed or put at risk of harm):**

[HB 5853](#)

Nearly half of all cases filed in district court in Michigan were traffic misdemeanors. Whenever possible, Michigan should be ensuring people don't have to risk incarceration to drive to work.

Mandatory minimums take away judicial discretion to choose alternatives to incarceration when appropriate. Whenever appropriate, we should be ensuring that sentences include alternatives in place of incarceration.

Questions? Contact John Cooper, Executive Director of Safe & Just Michigan, at 517.258.1134 or [john@safeandjustmi.org](mailto:john@safeandjustmi.org)

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