RECENT LEGISLATIVE TRENDS IN SENTENCING AND CORRECTIONS

Summary of research, with a focus on legislation passed in 2010-2012 as the result of efforts by a state-level, inter-branch working group

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States with the most comprehensive recent sentencing and corrections reform legislation (2010-2012):

- Arkansas
- Georgia
- Kentucky
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Pennsylvania
- South Carolina
- Vermont
**Common Trajectory**

Working group is formed, often appointed by Legislature or Governor

Motivated by fiscal pressures and desire for data-driven policy

Technical assistance provided by Pew, CSGJC, etc.

Working group issues recommendations

Some/all of recommendations are translated into bill

Bill passes with – often overwhelming – bipartisan support

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**Areas of Reform**

- Reduce time served in prison and on community supervision
  - Decrease admissions
  - Shorten stays/supervision periods
- Expand community corrections options
- Reduce probation/parole revocations
- Mandate risk and needs assessment
- Ensure reinvestment
- Require evaluation of policy changes
### “Sentencing Commissions”

- **Make-up:**
  - Bipartisan
  - Inter-branch
  - Sometimes non-government stakeholders
  - 7 to 26 members

- **Role:**
  - Make recommendations
  - Draft legislation

- **Keys to success?**

### Sources: existing research and reports

Further Inquiry/Research?