

Mike Bloomberg's Criminal Justice Policy

Mike Bloomberg knows we can end an era of mass incarceration while also reducing crime. Mike believes America must address deep-seated racial and economic inequities in the criminal justice system. We need to invest in smart and just policing, curb excessive use of force, build community trust and focus on victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking. We must re-balance the scales in the courtroom to ensure a fair trial, end federal cash bail and curb excessive sentencing. We'll set a goal to halve incarceration in 10 years, and re-imagine jails and prisons as places where rehabilitation, skills development and education can take place. We'll help people returning from prison with a work program and robust re-entry services. And we will invest in young men of color, who have been particularly impacted by the system's inequities, helping them find pathways to opportunity through new educational and community initiatives. Under Mike's leadership, we can achieve these goals—he showed the way as mayor, driving down incarceration and helping justice-involved people re-enter society even as he helped make New York the safest big city in America.

Mike proposes investing \$20 billion over 10 years to power these reforms in states, \$2.5 billion over a decade to even the playing field for public defense and \$1 billion to revive and sustain the federal My Brother's Keeper Initiative. A new Department of Justice office will evaluate local needs and fund priority items on a state-by-state basis—requiring states to cut incarceration rates and meet other targets to receive federal dollars. DOJ will also ramp up efforts to protect civil rights by targeting excessive police force, prosecutorial abuses and inhumane prison conditions.

And Mike knows we can't simply use this system to fix tears in the social fabric. Through his economic justice, education, health coverage and housing affordability plans, he will reverse historic under-investments in Black and other at-risk communities—building a future where fewer Americans face criminal justice consequences.

In Jackson, Mississippi last December, Mike announced the key pillars of a plan to address this issue. This platform builds upon that first policy rollout, in which he pledged to prioritize juvenile justice, fund local violence interrupter programs, reform the bail system and bring new re-entry and career-training programming to prisons.

1. Invest in just and smart policing, rebuilding community trust while focusing on the people at highest risk. Stop excessive police force and build resources to work with vulnerable populations. Support victims of domestic violence, gun violence, hate crimes, and human trafficking.

Mike will protect the public with a focus on community leadership, procedural justice and people at high risk of violence.

- **Fund violence intervention programs like Cure Violence and the Crisis Management System.** These programs mobilize community members and credible messengers to de-escalate tensions and break the cycle of violence. *In areas of New York that implemented Cure Violence while Mike was at City Hall, gun violence rates fell by as much as [50%](#)¹ in four years.*

¹ John Jay College of Criminal Justice, [The Effects of Cure Violence in the South Bronx and East New York, Brooklyn](#), October 2017

- **Fund social workers and credible messengers to help law enforcement work with vulnerable populations.** Some crises that spark a 911 call require mental health or homeless services professionals as much as they do police. We should help build a model for dispatching help and teaming social service professionals with police, so we can effectively respond to social problems that prompt calls for help. Mike will fund grants, including from the Community Oriented Policing Services Office, for police departments to hire non-officers like social workers and drug counselors—and credible messengers that can help de-escalate before violence occurs.
- **Invest in “focused deterrence” programs that motivate at-risk people to stand down before they commit violence.**
 - Mike will fund “focused deterrence” programs that concentrate resources on people at highest risk of committing violence, offering help for those who de-escalate—such as employment, drug and alcohol treatment, education assistance—and holding accountable those who do harm to their communities. Ceasefire programs that focus on community partnerships and social support have cut homicide dramatically in cities like [Oakland](#)²; [Stockton](#)³ has also seen a major reduction in killings and shootings.
 - Mike will insist that police are guided by procedural justice principles—fair and consistent processes, transparent policies and impartial application. Mike will also fund community-based programs that improve physical spaces and lift up neighborhoods in crisis, ensuring that local voices are prioritized at every step.
- **Fund technology to support intelligence-based crime reduction.** Mike will invest in the latest technology to integrate criminal justice data with license plate readers, cameras, gunshot detection and other police tools that help reduce crime in those communities hardest hit by violence. He will incorporate experts to guard against racial bias with any tools used to determine bail or probation conditions. *New York City is the safest big city in the country, and murders fell by over 50%*⁴ while Mike was in office.

Mike will prevent excessive police force and ensure law enforcement does the hard work to build public trust.

- **Raise the standard for police use of force. Require de-escalation and bias training.**
 - Mike will sign a bill raising the standard for use of force by federal officers—barring deadly force unless it’s necessary to prevent serious injury or death and barring other force unless it’s necessary to make an arrest.
 - Federal officers will receive regular training in de-escalation and implicit bias, with a focus on building public trust. They will meet with justice-involved people to build an understanding of the impact that over-policing can have on a person’s life.
 - With about [18,000](#)⁵ law enforcement agencies nationwide, practices for use of force and officer training vary widely. Mike will direct DOJ to perform a national review of police policies – with input from communities and criminal justice advocates – and with the aim of developing best practices and approaches.

² Oakland Ceasefire Impact Evaluation, *Key Findings*, August 2018

³ Giffords Law Center, *A Case Study in Hope: Lessons From Oakland’s Remarkable Reduction in Gun Violence*, April 2019

⁴ There were 714 murders and non-negligent manslaughters in NYC in 2001, and 335 of these crimes in 2013. Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics*

⁵ Bureau of Justice Statistics, *National Sources of Law Enforcement Employment Data*, October 2016

- Mike will press states to follow the federal lead with their own use of force statutes, and will fund training nationwide—with the goal of raising and unifying standards across the country.
- *With Mike at City Hall, police shootings fell to historic lows.*
- **Promote early intervention systems, body cameras, and independent oversight.**
 - Mike will require federal officers to wear body cameras and will fund cameras for state and local police.
 - Federal agencies will employ early warning systems to identify at-risk officers and intervene with additional training and counseling before abuse occurs—and will fund these [effective](#)⁶ programs in the states.
 - Mike will ensure federal law enforcement use independent and transparent oversight boards to hold abusive officers accountable, and will pressure states to do the same.
 - Mike will also re-invigorate the Community Relations Service with a new mandate to help law enforcement and community groups connect, to defuse tensions and prevent over-policing, and to help vulnerable populations find the services they need.
- **Re-invigorate “pattern or practice” investigations to reform departments with an abusive history.** With a new mission to seek comprehensive police reform, Mike’s Department of Justice will re-start the enforcement work that Trump has abandoned, suing local agencies with records of abuse. He will charge the Office of Civil Rights with developing metrics to measure abuse, focusing on our most racially segregated communities, and with opening investigations in dozens of American cities.
- **Expand data on police use of force.** Very little data on officer-involved shootings is available, making it difficult to target effective policies and hold agencies accountable. Mike will press state and local agencies to report all incidents to the FBI’s Use-of-Force Data Collection and will publish information broadly—making it clear that agencies put federal funding at risk by failing to report. And Mike will use the data to drive change, tasking the new Justice Reform Office to build the analytic tools and study police behavior — and start the work of [holding police accountable](#) for equity in their work.⁷
- **Expand services for police and invest in law enforcement training.**
 - Mike will fund officer mental health and peer support programs, including services for first responders and officers at risk of suicide. He will build protocols to protect police responding to high-risk situations.
 - He will also invest in police training through state academies and higher education programs, in partnership with the justice reclamation centers proposed in this platform—building a generation of law enforcement focused on procedural justice and building public trust in their communities.

Mike will focus on victims of domestic violence, gun violence, hate crimes and human trafficking.

- **Increase funding to family justice centers.**

⁶ National Institute of Justice, *Early Warning Systems*, July 2001

⁷ Mike would look to model a version of COMPSTAT for Justice. See Center for Policing Equity, *Re-Imagining Public Safety*, November 2019.

- Mike will add funding to build family justice centers, which provide one-stop services for survivors of domestic violence and their children regardless of their immigration status or the language they speak—and make it easier for victims to seek justice. He will also increase funding for domestic violence organizations that provide critical community-based services.
- *At City Hall, Mike pioneered these centers, which had [nearly 250,000 client visits](#) in their first nine years. Family-related homicides [fell 21%](#) from 2002 to 2012 and early engagement in Brooklyn [led to a 38% rise](#) in abuser convictions.*
- Mike will also build special units to prosecute people for domestic violence and sexual assault.
- **Re-authorize the Violence Against Women Act, with necessary improvements.** Mike will sign a bill re-authorizing VAWA immediately, on the model of the House-passed H.R. 1585. It will increase funding for rape prevention and housing protections for victims, who are [four times more likely](#)¹¹ to face housing instability.
- **Eliminate the national rape kit backlog.** Too often, law enforcement doesn't have the funding or infrastructure to test rape kits—and alarmingly, rape allegations are often not taken seriously. Mike will calculate the scale of the national backlog—estimated to be as high as [200,000 kits](#)¹²—and will set a goal of eliminating it entirely, with public pressure on states to act, along with funding to test kits and for investigations and prosecutions.
- **Encourage employers to help workers who have suffered domestic abuse.** Mike will help employers fund paid leave, re-location assistance and other services for survivors.
- **Protect survivors of sexual assault on campus.**
 - Mike will reverse Trump-era regulations on campus sexual assault that discourage survivors from coming forward and restore guidance that presses schools to adjudicate cases thoroughly.
 - He will sign the Campus Accountability and Safety Act, which requires campus coordinators who connect assault survivors with services and assist with reporting to authorities, sets a uniform process for disciplinary proceedings, streamlines campus communication with police and stiffens penalties for schools that fail to report incidents to the government.
 - Mike will expand sexual assault prevention and services to American high schools.
- **Start a national helpline and an advisory council for survivors of gun violence.** Gun violence survivors need their own stream of government services.
 - Mike will launch a phone helpline similar to the domestic violence hotline.
 - The resources available to help survivors can be hard to find and hard to use. Mike will set up an interagency advisory [council](#)¹³, with members from the survivor community, to

⁸ NYC.gov, [Domestic Violence Annual Fact Sheet 2013](#)

⁹ NYC.gov, [New York City Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee Annual Report 2013](#)

¹⁰ New York City Criminal Justice Agency, [Early Victim Engagement in Domestic Violence Cases](#), January 2013

¹¹ Housing Matters, [Safe Housing for Domestic Violence Survivors Is More Than Shelter](#), June 2018

¹² The Atlantic, [These Attacks Could've Been Prevented](#), July 2019

¹³ Congress.gov, [Resources for Victims of Gun Violence Act of 2019](#)

serve as a clearinghouse to understand survivors' medical, financial, and legal needs, to connect people with available resources and to advocate for new funds and programming.

- Mike will also create state-federal task forces of prosecutors and police to combat gun trafficking.

- **Bolster Victims of Crime Act funding for gun violence victims.**

- Mike will set aside 10% of all VOCA funding for gun violence victims, similar to provisions for victims of sexual assault and victims of domestic violence. And he will ensure there is a VOCA focus on services for parents of murdered children.
- Mike will also improve VOCA access by barring states from [blocking applicants](#)¹⁴ with prior criminal history, and he will put a special focus on housing assistance for survivors.

- **Create victims' bills of rights.** Mike will encourage states to enshrine victims' bill of rights, including the right to be heard in court and to be notified of an abuser or shooter's release.

- **Make hate and bias crimes a top federal priority.** Violent hate crime is at a [16-year high](#)¹⁵, and yet few people [are charged](#)¹⁶ with hate crimes.

- Mike will direct the FBI to take the lead on bias crime investigations. Where possible, he will charge crimes as domestic terrorism and label white nationalists as terrorists.
- Mike's FBI will train local authorities to identify hate crimes. Mike will press states to report all hate crimes to the federal government—and will publish the details on this data broadly.
- Mike will invest in Community Partnership grants to break up white nationalist groups.

- **Make human trafficking a top federal priority.** Mike will establish joint federal-state task forces to crack down on sexual exploitation and to bring services to victims. *While at City Hall, Mike created a task force for counseling and housing victims of trafficking and led the fight for a state law cracking down on traffickers.*

2. Invest in young men of color and create justice reclamation centers at historically Black colleges and universities.

- **Fund \$100 million annually to revive [My Brother's Keeper Initiative](#) as a federal initiative,** launching a national effort to invest in young men of color—focused on creating opportunity while preventing entry into the criminal justice system.

- Mike will set up a permanent funding stream through the new Neighborhood Equity and Opportunity Office (NEO), created by Mike's [Greenwood Initiative](#), to support the My Brother's Keeper/My Sister's Keeper Initiatives (MBK) founded in response to President Obama's MBK initiative.
- This would be the first direct funding stream to support MBK. State, county and local governments will apply jointly with community-based organizations, and NEO will work with groups like [Cities United](#)¹⁷ to ensure potential grantees have assistance applying for and carrying out their programs.

¹⁴ The Marshall Project, [States have money to help victims of crime](#), September 2018

¹⁵ The New York Times, [Hate-Crime Violence Hits 16-Year High](#), F.B.I. Reports, November 2019

¹⁶ TRAC, [Few Federal Hate Crime Referrals Result in Prosecution](#), August 2019

¹⁷ [About Cities United](#)

- Mike will ensure effectiveness by funding the NEO and the Office of Justice Programs to study and produce evidence about the impact of community-driven solutions like social emotional learning and cognitive behavioral therapy.
- He will establish a National Trauma-Informed Care Task Force to study the effects of early trauma—and to recommend practices to formalize the delivery of quality care across federal agencies that touch low-income families and justice-involved people.
- *At City Hall, Mike launched the Young Men’s Initiative (YMI), the first-ever municipal project focused on the persistent disparities young men of color experience in education, employment, health and justice. YMI included [45 initiatives across 20 agencies](#),¹⁸ investing [\\$43 million annually](#)¹⁹ to challenge systemic barriers and implicit bias in service delivery. The initiative provided a foundation for MBK, which replicated the plan [in 250 cities](#)²⁰ across the country. Since Mike left office, Bloomberg Associates has supported [25 of these cities](#)²¹ to develop and implement their local plans.*
- **Create justice reclamation centers at HBCUs around the country.** The centers will be hubs of history, scholarship and public education that will chronicle an era, create the conditions for healing based on the best social science, and devise constructive strategies for policing, remediation and community involvement.
 - Mike will set up a network of justice reclamation centers around the country, headquartered at HBCUs and individually tailored with a community and regional focus.
 - The centers will have a special focus on restorative justice, the process by which those who were harmed by a crime or injustice, and those who caused the harm, come together to find resolution. The centers will create spaces for this proven approach to take place—and chronicle and measure the results to develop best practices.
 - The centers will partner with local MBK projects in their region, helping give communities the tools to drive policy—from policing reforms to strategies to rebuild community trust to delivering trauma-informed services that can disrupt the poverty to prison pipeline. And schools will fund art, advocacy and historical scholarship—so stories like the Black Wall Street Massacre are never again left untold.
 - *As a candidate, Mike will convene a summit at an HBCU to be attended by HBCU presidents and faculty, justice-involved people, legal experts and advocates. Mike will use this opportunity to listen—and to invite the community to devise a vision for the justice reclamation centers so that he will have a blueprint for the project on day one of his administration.*
- Launch the **Greenwood Initiative**. Mike recognizes that the divide between Black and white America must be addressed not only because it is morally unacceptable, but because it is preventing our whole nation from truly prospering.
 - The Greenwood Initiative is a comprehensive set of policies targeted toward the Black Community. It aligns with Mike’s criminal justice policy in that it focuses on upstream strategies and prevention while also acknowledging the broad role racial bias has played in American life.
 - [Read more about the Greenwood Initiative.](#)

¹⁸ NYC Open Data

¹⁹ City Limits, *Young Men’s Initiative Shows Promise—and Limits*, December 2013

²⁰ Obama White House, *New Cities Join My Brother’s Keeper Success Mentors Initiative to Combat Chronic Student Absences and Drive School and Life Success*, June 2016

²¹ Bloomberg Associates, *My Brother’s Keeper Houston*, June 2018

3. Address injustice in the legal system with systemic reform that gives everyone access to a strong defense and curbs abuse by prosecutors, ends federal cash bail and rolls back punitive sentencing practices.

Mike will rebalance the scales to provide a robust defense and create a watchdog for prosecutors.

- **Fund \$2.5 billion over 10 years for public defense.** Public defense is underfunded in the states, leading to longer sentences and wrongful convictions. More than [7 in 10](#)²² defender offices need more lawyers for their caseloads. Mike will increase funding for public defense—requiring grantees to have pay parity for defenders and prosecutors, as well as workload limits that ensure fair representation.
- **Put tools in place to curb abuse by prosecutors.** Prosecutors shape the system with decisions on who and what to charge, and often over-charge defendants and deny defense access to exculpatory evidence. Among 660 cases of abuse within 5 years, [only one](#)²³ prosecutor was disciplined.
 - Mike will use “pattern or practice” investigative power to stop [cases](#)²⁴ of abuse by local prosecutors, seeking consent decrees that force those offices to change.
 - Mike will set federal guidelines on plea bargaining and discovery for U.S. Attorneys and will reward offices that have a record of reducing both incarceration and crime in their districts.
 - U.S. Attorneys will begin reporting data on their charging decisions, plea offers and dispositions. The Department of Justice will start a national data collection and encourage local prosecutors to follow the transparency model of Cook County, Illinois, where the prosecutor [released years](#)²⁵ of detailed case data.
- **Fund conviction integrity units and crime-solving technology.** Conviction integrity units helped exonerate [nearly 400 people](#)²⁶ over the past 12 years.
 - Mike will set up a federal unit and will fund units in the states—requiring grantees to have staffing by defense attorneys and to grant defendants unfettered access to exculpatory material.
 - Mike will also fund technology like ballistics testing and DNA labs, increasing the capacity to close cases and giving victims and defendants comfort that justice will be served. He will incentivize restorative justice efforts to help repair the harm caused by criminal behavior.

Mike will end federal cash bail, end court fines and punitive fees and expand diversion programs.

²² Brennan Center for Justice, [A Fair Fight](#), September 2019

²³ Innocence Project, [Prosecutorial Oversight](#), March 2016

²⁴ The New York Times, [The Presence of Malice](#), August 2007

²⁵ Cook County State’s Attorney, [The Data-Driven CCSAO](#)

²⁶ The New York Times, [Prosecutors Usually Send People to Prison. These Are Getting Them Out](#), November 2019

- **End federal cash bail and incentivize states to follow suit, expanding release programs.** About [two-thirds](#)²⁷ of all people incarcerated in jail are currently awaiting trial. Even a short detention can jeopardize child custody, housing and job security.
 - Mike will sign a bill ending federal cash bail – except in cases of demonstrable flight risk such as white-collar crime. He will press states to do the same. He will build out supervised release alternatives to take the place of bail and pretrial incarceration.
 - *At City Hall, Mike pioneered a release program that provided judges with pre-trial alternatives to confinement and bail for people who were not high-risk. Medium-risk defendants were monitored in the community by non-profit service providers, including mental health providers. Low-risk defendants did not require monitoring.*
- **End federal court fees and ensure fines fit with ability to pay; press states to do the same.** Many defendants face onerous criminal justice debt that [frustrates re-entry](#)²⁸ and keeps them in the system for too long.
 - Mike will address the criminalization of poverty by signing a bill ending federal court fees, requiring fines be commensurate with a person’s ability to pay and banning incarceration for failure to pay.
 - Mike will pressure states to follow suit, and will play a federal watchdog role—reinstating the [Obama memo](#)²⁹ on the unconstitutionality of onerous fines, fees and bail.
- **Expand diversion efforts that can lead to dismissal, including drug treatment, mental health care and youth counseling.** Mike believes that in certain cases the best way to preserve public safety is not to prosecute, but rather to address the problems that initially brought someone into the criminal justice system, like drug addiction and mental illness. He will increase funding for [diversion programs](#)³⁰ that hold people accountable but don’t result in a criminal conviction. *At City Hall, Mike [increased](#)³¹ juvenile diversion by 36%, and 88% of those youth successfully completed diversion programs.*

Mike will rebuild sentencing so that it addresses actual risk.

- **End three-strikes laws, mandatory minimums and the crack/powder cocaine disparity.** Mike will press states to end three-strikes and mandatory minimums laws, which have led to excessive sentencing with consequences that have fallen disproportionately on Black communities. He will sign a bill repealing those penalties federally and removing the disparity between crack and powder cocaine sentences.
- **Propose new federal sentences and spotlight states with especially harsh regimes.** Mike will conduct a wide-ranging study on recidivism risk—and recommend new federal sentences and guidelines. He will press for a state overhaul by bringing attention to especially punitive state laws and those with racially disproportionate impacts.

²⁷ Copp, Jennifer E., and William D. Bales. 2018. “[Jails and Local Justice System Reform: An Overview and Recommendations.](#)” *The Future of Children*, 28(1), 103-124.

²⁸ Brennan Center for Justice, [Criminal Justice Debt: A Barrier to Reentry](#), October 2010

²⁹ Department of Justice, [2016 memo](#)

³⁰ [Project Reset Brooklyn](#)

³¹ NYC.gov, [A Progress Report from the NYC Department of Probation](#), December 2013

- **Decriminalize possession of marijuana and commute all sentences.** Mike believes that further scientific study is required to assess the health effects of marijuana. In the meantime, he believes that no one should go to jail for smoking or possessing it. He recognizes that the criminal approach to marijuana has fallen disproportionately on the Black community: While white and Black people in the U.S. use marijuana at roughly equal rates, Black Americans are [nearly four times](#)³² more likely to be arrested for possession. Mike supports decriminalizing possession of small amounts nationally and would commute all remaining sentences and expunge sentences from criminal records. He also believes that for the moment this is an issue best left to the states, taking public health and safety into account.
- **End the federal death penalty.** Mike will set a Bureau of Prisons policy blocking all executions, commute all death row sentences to life without parole and sign a law abolishing capital punishment.
- **Move the clemency office out of the Department of Justice.**
 - Mike will immediately re-instate President Obama’s [clemency initiative](#), which helped lead to over 1,700 commutations.³³ Then Mike would expand that policy: He believes clemency decisions should be independent of prosecutors responsible for securing convictions, and will create a special clemency office that advises him directly.
 - The First Step Act took critical action to reduce sentences, but it should have retroactive application. Mike will give clemency to people who would have been covered in that bill. He will then set a broad pro-clemency policy for people who do not pose a public danger.

4. Launch a Department of Justice reform hub for criminal justice interventions in the states. Set a goal to reduce incarceration by 50% by 2030 and cut crime, promoting strategies pioneered in New York City. Re-imagine prisons as a place of redirection and redemption, not a place to warehouse people.

Mike will launch a DOJ Justice Reform Office.

- **Fund \$20 billion over 10 years for state-level criminal justice reform efforts, centralized in a new Justice Reform Office.**
 - This new cross-disciplinary office will bring an end to piecemeal DOJ funding of local criminal justice reform initiatives. It will centralize efforts, rationalize analysis across criminal justice areas, and set funding priorities on a state-by-state basis. It will require grant recipients to meet locally targeted metrics, including lowering incarceration and crime. The office will have authority to condition existing funding (such as Byrne-JAG grants) on state and local improvements as well, and will make an accounting of the federal dollars [already flowing](#)³⁴ to jails and prisons.
 - As the prison population declines, Mike will offer local economic development packages to offset costs of closing prisons and find employment for people who lose their jobs.
 - Mike believes it’s critical to hear the voices of those whose lives have been shaped by the criminal justice system, and would appoint a reform council staffed with a majority of formerly justice-involved people – along with prosecutors, defense and law enforcement.

³² ACLU, Report: The War on Marijuana in Black and White, June 2013

³³ Department of Justice, Clemency Initiative

³⁴ Vera, If You Build It, January 2020

Mike will set a goal to cut incarceration by 50%, as well as spread the use of alternatives pioneered in New York City.

- **Set a goal to reduce the prison population by 50% by 2030, halve youth incarceration in the first four years, reform “youth prisons.”**
 - Mass incarceration has dramatic racial dimensions: Black Americans make up 13% of the U.S. population, but [are 40%](#)³⁵ of all incarcerated people. Building on his success in New York, Mike will set a goal to cut incarceration in half, eliminating detention of non-violent, low-risk youth.
 - Mike will incentivize states to eliminate large youth prisons that are often located far from youths’ homes. When youth have to be confined for public safety reasons, he will promote the use of small, local rehabilitative facilities—like he did when he was mayor.
 - Mike will press states to adopt evidence-based strategies like supervised release, alternative placement, drug courts, community service, credible messengers and mental health and drug treatment.
 - Mike will launch a new work program for people convicted but not incarcerated.
 - *When Mike was mayor, incarceration rates dropped by [39%](#)³⁶—and were one-third lower than the rest of the nation. Mike cut youth incarceration by [36%](#),³⁷ and his *Close to Home* program brought all young people out of upstate prisons and [back into their own homes](#)³⁸ or shared living facilities in the city.*

- **Focus probation on getting people out of the system; cut revocation by one-third nationally.**
 - Too many people are stuck in the system, with a [ballooning population](#)³⁹ stuck in the [revolving door](#)⁴⁰ of probation and parole and often jailed for minor violations. Mike will end the era of over-supervision by focusing probation and parole on re-integration into society—with the aim of reducing revocation by one-third in his first term, a benchmark states have [already achieved](#)⁴¹ with reform efforts.
 - *At City Hall, Mike pioneered reform efforts that transformed probation into a [community reinvestment model](#)⁴² that serves people where they live. With a mandate to get people out of the system, over several years New York City [reduced](#)⁴³ the rate of adult probation violations by 45%.*

Mike will promote rehabilitation in prison.

- **Launch a national effort to eliminate unsanitary and unsafe prison conditions.**
 - Because he believes incarcerated people have a right to rehabilitation, Mike will increase funding to improve health and safety in federal, state and local prisons.
 - Mike will restart “pattern or practice” work to fight abusive conditions in the states—and will create a commission to design a national system of correctional oversight.

³⁵ Prison Policy Initiative, [Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2019](#)

³⁶ NYC.gov, [Jail and Prison Inmates per 100,000 Residents](#)

³⁷ Mayors Management Report, 2002; Mayor’s Management Report, 2013

³⁸ San Francisco Chronicle, [Keeping kids out of cells](#), December 2019

³⁹ Brennan Center for Justice, [Just Facts: The Probation Nation](#), March 2016

⁴⁰ [Reform Alliance](#)

⁴¹ The Council of State Governments Justice Center, [Reducing Recidivism](#), June 2017

⁴² The Philadelphia Inquirer, [What if the probation office was a place of joy instead of fear?](#) January 2020

⁴³ NYC.gov, [A Progress Report from the NYC Department of Probation](#), December 2013

- Too many incarcerated people suffer abuse without recourse. Mike will [remove barriers](#)⁴⁴ to individual lawsuits by incarcerated people in the Prison Litigation Reform Act.
- Mike will issue an executive order banning solitary confinement for all federally incarcerated people, other than in extreme cases. He will pressure states to end solitary nationwide.
- **Start re-entry on day one, with education, job training, and health care in prison.**
 - Mike will restore Pell Grants for all incarcerated people and funding for states to support educational programming. More than 200,000 incarcerated people could benefit from Pell Grants, leading to [a 10% increase](#)⁴⁵ in employment for the formerly incarcerated.
 - Mike will put a national focus on funding modernized vocational training in prison, with new funding to support pre-discharge job placement for people re-entering society.
 - He will bolster mental health and drug treatment for the prison population, which has high rates of [mental illness](#)⁴⁶ and [substance abuse](#).⁴⁷ Mike recognizes that many justice-involved people are living with trauma associated with poverty or exposure to violence and would focus on expanding a trauma-informed model of care.
- **Restore Obama order ending for-profit federal prisons.** Mike believes that a profit motive can create perverse incentives to keep people in prisons—and that the U.S. should not have for-profit prisons.

5. Help people returning from prison re-enter society, create a new work program and offer robust re-entry services from housing to mental health and substance abuse programs.

Mike will start a work program for returning citizens and improve job access.

- **Launch a federal work program. Support employers of formerly incarcerated people.**
 - Building on his success in New York, Mike will fund a work program to help connect the formerly incarcerated with sustainable employment. He will promote the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and Federal Bonding Program that incentivize employers and remove the current limitations in order to provide support for several years after re-entry.
 - *At City Hall, Mike launched the Transitional Jobs Program, which provided people with temporary jobs. For those who joined shortly after leaving prison, the program led to reductions in recidivism up to 22%.⁴⁸ Through the Fortune Fellowship, Mike's company [provides](#)⁴⁹ employment for justice-involved people.*
- **Expand “ban the box” and incentivize states to do the same.**
 - As president, Mike will ensure the policy reaches all federal jobs and will press states to do the same. He will urge states to remove occupational licensing barriers that block many people from full access to jobs.

⁴⁴ Prison Policy Initiative, *20 Years is enough*, May 2016

⁴⁵ Vera, *Investing in Futures*, January 2019

⁴⁶ Treatment Advocacy Center, *Serious Mental Illness Prevalence in Jails and Prisons*, September 2016

⁴⁷ Prison Policy Initiative, *BJS Report*, June 2017

⁴⁸ OPRE, *More Than a Job*, January 2012

⁴⁹ Bloomberg, *3 Ways Bloomberg Philanthropy and engagement changed the world in 2018*, January 2019

- As mayor, [Mike signed](#)⁵⁰ a “ban the box” order that blocked city agencies and contractors from asking about criminal history in initial hiring stages.
- Mike will also seal records if a person no longer poses a public safety threat, appointing a commission to study when sealing is appropriate.

Mike will bolster federal funding of re-entry services.

- **Expand grants to build permanent and transitional supportive housing for formerly incarcerated people.** Mike will expand on his pioneering work as mayor to fund supportive housing for formerly incarcerated people at risk of homelessness. *The Frequent Users Services Enhancement program led to a 70% drop in homelessness and a 40% drop in incarceration. Each person housed by FUSE [generated](#)⁵¹ \$15,000 in savings, covering nearly two-thirds of costs.*
- **Fund mental health and addiction programs for incarcerated and newly released people.** Without access to care, too many incarcerated people wind up in jeopardy. For example, incarcerated people who abuse drugs [go on](#)⁵² to have high homelessness rates after returning from prison. Mike will fund trauma-informed mental health care and substance abuse services for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people that provide continuous care and support long-term success.
- **Broaden access to public housing, welfare and student loans for formerly incarcerated people.**
 - People with criminal histories face [countless barriers](#)⁵³ to re-entry. Mike will sign a bill removing barriers to temporary assistance and SNAP. Mike will eliminate obstacles for returning to public housing—and would adopt the Obama administration’s [guidance](#)⁵⁴ on the Fair Housing Act, enforcing the law against landlords who discriminate illegally on the basis of a housing applicant’s criminal history.
 - Mike will restore student aid access for formerly incarcerated people with drug convictions and remove the question about drug convictions from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
- **Invest in credible messengers.** No voices are more important in protecting our communities than those of credible messengers, people with a history of justice involvement who can form a connection with at-risk young people—challenging them to de-escalate and embark on a more constructive path. Credible messengers, like those trained by the [Credible Messenger Justice Center](#), can also provide a bridge between communities and law enforcement, [improving outcomes](#),⁵⁵ building trust and empowering neighborhoods. Mike would help grow the movement by funding [credential programs](#)⁵⁶ that help credible messengers carry out this critical work.

⁵⁰ NYC Gov, [Consideration of Criminal Convictions in Hiring](#), August 2011

⁵¹ Columbia University, [‘Fuse’ Initiative](#)

⁵² The Atlantic, [The Repurposing of the American Jail](#), November 2019

⁵³ U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, [Collateral Consequences](#), June 2019

⁵⁴ HUD guidance, April 2016

⁵⁵ Urban Institute, [Arches Transformative Mentoring Program](#), February 2018

⁵⁶ Center for New York City Affairs

Mike will address the children of the incarceration crisis.

- **Expand funding of social services for families.** At least [2.7 million children](#)⁵⁷ have a parent in prison. They have higher risk of depression, school dropout and substance abuse—and they are [six times more likely](#)⁵⁸ to end up behind bars themselves. In addition to working to keep caregiver parents out of custody and in community-based correctional settings, Mike will expand social services for this community, with new access to counseling and new financial assistance for families. He will also build a funding stream to protect children in traumatic interactions with police, including when their parents are being arrested.
- **Make visitation and access easier.**
 - Mike will set a strong uniform federal policy on visiting hours and subsidized funding for family transportation—and he will press states to follow suit.
 - Mike will ensure the justice system takes geography into account, and that where possible federally incarcerated people are kept within a reasonable distance from their families.

⁵⁷ Prison Fellowship, “FAQs About Children of Prisoners”

⁵⁸ National Institute of Justice, [Hidden Consequences](#), March 2017