

# Notes

from

## The Fall of Sentencing Credits in Michigan Prisons

How False Narratives of Crime & Violence Fueled Mass Incarceration

Where  
We Are

Michigan currently requires every person convicted of a felony serve 100% of their minimum sentence before they are eligible for parole. This is due to Truth in Sentencing and not having any form of sentencing credit that allows people in prison the opportunity to earn time off their sentence for good behavior or vocational and educational achievements.

**We are just 1 of 6 states that does not use a sentencing credit.** Michigan consistently ranks among the states in the country with some of the longest lengths of stay in prison and highest rates of people under correctional supervision.

How We  
Got Here

Understanding how and why policy decisions were made that contributed to our current state of mass incarceration requires analyzing a variety of social and political factors. **The full report** and **the visual timeline** provide insight into examples of those sociopolitical factors that supported the elimination of sentencing credits.

### The takeaways are:

- The public was miseducated on the causes of violence and crime, and what the most effective responses should have been
- Racism, classism and other forms of oppression have all played major roles in feeding into this miseducation
- Public figures with political ambition capitalized on opportunities to stoke fear rather than re-educate

Where We  
Want to Be

We know that 80% of crime survivors in MI support reducing prison sentences for people in prison who participate in rehabilitation, mental health, substance abuse, or educational or vocational programs. We also know that long sentences are more likely to decrease, rather than increase, public safety.

We have been able to reduce the prison population slightly in recent years. But we also know that if we ever hope to achieve imprisonment rates that are comparable to those we had before this era of mass incarceration (or better yet, even lower), while maintaining public safety, we need to stop using unnecessarily long sentences. We need to rely on what evidence tells us is the most effective response to crime: addressing the root causes. **Bringing back a sentencing credit system would be a significant step in that direction.**

# Annotated Timeline

## of

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These events are examples of the connection between policy decisions that contributed to our current state of mass incarceration and sociopolitical demands. The complete timeline with supporting documents can be found [here](#).

