

California

The project selected California to receive intensive, nonpartisan research, analysis, and expertise. The state's prison system is in crisis and leaders at the state and local level are actively exploring ways to manage the current prison and parole populations, as well as reform sentencing laws and reduce the high rate of recidivism.

Progress Update »

California prisons house about 171,000 inmates, almost double their capacity. Faced with a possible federal takeover of the state prison system, the California legislature passed a law in April 2007 that provides \$7.9 billion for construction of 53,000 new beds in prisons, jails and reentry facilities, and authorizes the transfer of 8,000 prisoners to other states. The law also allots \$50 million for new drug, vocational, academic and mental health programs. Despite the new law, many policymakers and experts alike believe more policy changes must occur to improve public safety and get corrections spending under control—including possible sentencing reforms and changes in dealing with offenders on parole who violate the conditions of their release. There also is widespread recognition that lawmakers and corrections officials need better data and analysis across agencies to make well-informed policy choices. Governor Schwarzenegger has stated that "everything is on the table" regarding California's sentencing and corrections systems. The Public Safety Performance Project and its partner, the Vera Institute of Justice, are working in California to convene and educate a wide range of key stakeholders and ensure that all policy options are fully investigated. In collaboration with our project, the Stanford Criminal Justice Center is convening a series of forums that will bring together state and local policymakers, corrections leaders, prosecutors, public defenders, victims' rights advocates and others.

State Research & Analysis »

State/County Criminal Justice Partnerships in California: An Abbreviated History

An account of the struggle between the State of California and its counties to allocate fiscal and administrative burdens in a manner that balances public safety needs with budgetary realities. Stanford Law School's Criminal Justice Center, a Public Safety Performance Project partner, prepared this document for the June 8, 2007 Executive Session of leading state and local policy makers.

[Download State/County Partnerships](#)

California Sentencing and Corrections: Significant Issues

An overview of the institutional challenges now facing California in the area of sentencing and corrections; the immediate legal constraints under which the state is operating; and the range of legislative and administrative proposals now under public discussion to solve these issues. Stanford Law School's Criminal Justice Center, a Public Safety Performance Project partner, prepared this document for a May 22, 2007 Executive Session with the state's prosecutors.

[Download California Sentencing and Corrections](#)

California Sentencing and Corrections: Some Interesting Inter-County Comparisons

An analysis of sentencing policies and practices in six California counties. Stanford Law School's Criminal Justice Center, a Public Safety Performance Project partner, presented this document during a May 22, 2007 Executive Session with the state's prosecutors.

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News

Select news clips »

- **Serving up justice**
- *The Sacramento Bee*
- June 3, 2007

Does this scenario seem familiar?

With prisons bulging, an inmate population expanding, prisons competing with schools for budget funds and courts threatening to intervene, the state had a predicament. Legislators wanted to be tough on crime. But even more, they didn't want to cede control of the prisons to the federal courts. So they started letting prisoners out -- in some weeks, by the hundreds...

To read the full article, visit the [Sacramento Bee Web site](#).

- **California to expand its packed prisons**
- *The Christian Science Monitor*
- April 30, 2007

Faced with prisons so overcrowded that the federal government is threatening intervention, California has opted for a massive expansion of existing facilities. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) this week is expected to sign a \$7.4 billion bill that will primarily add 53,000 beds, with a \$50 million sliver going to rehabilitation programs. California's state prisons currently house 172,000 convicts, nearly twice the system's capacity...

To read the full article, visit the [Christian Science Monitor Web site](#).

- **State prison reforms don't go far enough**
- *The Oakland Tribune*
- April 30, 2007

Striving to avert a federal takeover of state prisons, the California Legislature passed a \$6.1 billion package Thursday designed to relieve overcrowding and, hopefully, appease federal judges. It would add 53,000 new beds to a 33-prison system that now shoehorns 172,000 inmates into spaces built for 100,000. If the state didn't take steps to alleviate the problem, federal judges might have stepped in and released some inmates early to relieve the congestion. It could still happen...

To read the full article, visit the [Oakland Tribune Web site](#).