

# CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

To see more videos of Congresswoman Lee , click here.

<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL767322166EE8E0D7&feature=plcp>

---

*"Our criminal justice systems are sorely in need of reform. We must provide formerly incarcerated individuals with the necessary skills to earn a living wage and find stable employment, so that they may successfully reenter the community. And, we must end the cycle of injustice that is perpetuated by a system that continues to punish people, long after they have paid their debt to society."*

- Congresswoman Barbara Lee

At over 2.3 million, the United States has the highest prison population in the world, the vast majority of which are non-violent offenders. The criminal justice system also disproportionately impacts communities of color. African-American males make up six percent of the total population, but account for 48 percent of the prison population. Eighty two percent more Latinos are incarcerated than whites.

Rates of sexually transmitted infections such as HIV/AIDS among inmates in prisons are also higher than among the general population. Without proper healthcare services in prisons and referral services for inmates who are released back into their communities, these diseases may spread further.

While more than 95 percent of all offenders are released from prison, they face significant obstacles to finding work and housing and successfully returning to their communities. The lack of adequate rehabilitation and programs to facilitate reentry leads to recidivism and more crime.

As a member of Congress, Congresswoman Lee has continued her fight for criminal justice reform she began as a member of the California State Legislature. She is a member of the Public Safety, Sentencing and Incarceration Reform Caucus and has led efforts to create a comprehensive and bipartisan plan to reform reentry programs, to reinstate the right to vote for ex-offenders and to provide for federal record expungement. She has worked with community organizations and local courts to establish programs to help ex-offenders clear up criminal records and successfully return to the community.

## Sponsored Legislation

- **H.R.377:** *Food Assistance to Improve Reintegration Act of 2011* - Amends the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 to allow individuals who have been convicted of drug offense access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps). (Introduced 1/20/2011)
- **H.R.378:** *Public Housing Drug Elimination Program Reauthorization Act of 2011* - Authorizes appropriations for the assisted housing drug elimination program(Introduced 1/20/2011)
- **H.R.381:** *Enhanced Violent Crime Community Policing Act of 2011* - Allows grants to hire and train new career law enforcement officers for deployment in communities with high incidences of violent crime and authorizes the Attorney General to give preference to grant applications for the hiring and training of new career law enforcement officers for deployment in high crime areas. Specifies that grant amounts shall provide for a 5% to 10% increase in the size of a grantee's sworn police force. (Introduced 1/20/2011)
- **H.R.2704:** *JUSTICE Act* - To reduce the spread of sexually transmitted infections in correctional facilities through the use of contraceptives and education.