



# STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

[www.rightoncrime.com](http://www.rightoncrime.com)

**Jeb Bush**  
*Former Governor of Florida*

**Newt Gingrich**  
*American Solutions for Winning the Future*

**Grover Norquist**  
*Americans for Tax Reform*

**Edwin Meese III**  
*Former U.S. Attorney General*

**William J. Bennett**  
*Former Secretary of Education and Federal "Drug Czar"*

**Asa Hutchinson**  
*Former U.S. Attorney and Administrator of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration*

**J.C. Watts**  
*Former Member of the U.S. House of Representatives for Oklahoma's 4th Congressional District*

**Pat Nolan**  
*Justice Fellowship*

**David Keene**  
*Former Chairman of the American Conservative Union*

**Richard Viguerie**  
*ConservativeHQ.com*

**Chuck Colson (1931-2012)**  
*Prison Fellowship Ministries*

**Brooke Rollins**  
*Texas Public Policy Foundation*

**Ralph Reed**  
*Founder of the Faith and Freedom Coalition*

**Eli Lehrer**  
*R Street Institute*

**Larry Thompson**  
*Former U.S. Deputy Attorney General*

**Tony Perkins**  
*Family Research Council*

**Rabbi Daniel Lapin**  
*American Alliance of Jews and Christians*

**Penny Nance**  
*Concerned Women for America*

**John J. DiJulio, Jr.**  
*University of Pennsylvania*

**Ward Connerly**  
*American Civil Rights Institute and former Regent of University of California*

**Jerry Madden**  
*Former Texas House Corrections Chairman*

**George Kelling**  
*Manhattan Institute*

**Viet Dinh**  
*Georgetown University Law Center and former U.S. Assistant Attorney General*

**Gary Bauer**  
*American Values*

*List of signatories continues on back*

As members of the nation's conservative movement, we strongly support constitutionally limited government, transparency, individual liberty, personal responsibility, and free enterprise. We believe public safety is a core responsibility of government because the establishment of a well-functioning criminal justice system enforces order and respect for every person's right to property and life, and ensures that liberty does not lead to license.

Conservatives correctly insist that government services be evaluated on whether they produce the best possible results at the lowest possible cost, but too often this lens of accountability has not focused as much on public safety policies as other areas of government. As such, corrections spending has expanded to become the second fastest growing area of state budgets—trailing only Medicaid.

Conservatives are known for being tough on crime, but we must also be tough on criminal justice spending. That means demanding more cost-effective approaches that enhance public safety. A clear example is our reliance on prisons, which serve a critical role by incapacitating dangerous offenders and career criminals but are not the solution for every type of offender. And in some instances, they have the unintended consequence of hardening nonviolent, low-risk offenders—making them a greater risk to the public than when they entered.

Applying the following conservative principles to criminal justice policy is vital to achieving a cost-effective system that protects citizens, restores victims, and reforms wrongdoers.

1. As with any government program, the criminal justice system must be transparent and include performance measures that hold it accountable for its results in protecting the public, lowering crime rates, reducing re-offending, collecting victim restitution and conserving taxpayers' money.
2. Crime victims, along with the public and taxpayers, are among the key "consumers" of the criminal justice system; the victim's conception of justice, public safety, and the offender's risk for future criminal conduct should be prioritized when determining an appropriate punishment.

John McCollister

*Platte Institute (NE)*

Michael Carnuccio

*Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs*

Ronald F. Scheberle

*American Legislative Exchange Council*

David Barton

*WallBuilders*

Matthew J. Brouillette

*Commonwealth Foundation (PA)*

Forest Thigpen

*Mississippi Center for Public Policy*

George Liebmann

*Calvert Institute for Policy Research, Inc. (MD)*

John Hood

*John Locke Foundation (NC)*

Craig Ladwig

*Indiana Policy Review Foundation*

Deborah Daniels

*Former U.S. Attorney and Assistant U.S. Attorney General*

Dominic M. Calabro

*Florida TaxWatch*

Richard Doran

*Former Florida Attorney General*

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*Former Republican House Majority Whip, Colorado House of Representatives*

Kris Steele

*Former Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives*

Allan Bense

*Former Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives*

Kelly McCutchen

*Georgia Public Policy Foundation*

Donna Arduin

*Arduin, Laffer & Moore*

Henry Juszkievicz

*CEO of Gibson Guitar*

Kevin Kane

*Pelican Institute for Public Policy (LA)*

Bob Williams

*State Budget Solutions*

J. Robert McClure III

*James Madison Institute (FL)*

Paul Gessing

*Rio Grande Foundation (NM)*

Kevin Holtsberry

*Buckeye Institute for Public Policy Solutions (OH)*

Joe Whitley

*Former Acting U.S. Associate Attorney General and U.S. Attorney*

Jon Caldara

*Independence Institute*

Craig DeRoche

*Former Speaker of the Michigan House of Representatives*

B. Wayne Hughes, Jr.

*Businessman and Philanthropist*

Mike Thompson

*Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy*

Brenda Talent

*Show-Me Institute (MO)*

Donald Devine

*Former Director of the Office of Personnel Management*

3. The corrections system should emphasize public safety, personal responsibility, work, restitution, community service, and treatment—both in probation and parole, which supervise most offenders, and in prisons.
4. An ideal criminal justice system works to reform amenable offenders who will return to society through harnessing the power of families, charities, faith-based groups, and communities.
5. Because incentives affect human behavior, policies for both offenders and the corrections system must align incentives with our goals of public safety, victim restitution and satisfaction, and cost-effectiveness, thereby moving from a system that grows when it fails to one that rewards results.
6. Criminal law should be reserved for conduct that is either blame-worthy or threatens public safety, not wielded to grow government and undermine economic freedom.

These principles are grounded in time-tested conservative truths—constitutionally limited government, transparency, individual liberty, personal responsibility, free enterprise, and the centrality of the family and community. All of these are critical to addressing today's criminal justice challenges. It is time to apply these principles to the task of delivering a better return on taxpayers' investments in public safety. Our security, prosperity, and freedom depend on it.

## About Us

Right on Crime is a national initiative led by the Texas Public Policy Foundation, one of the nation's leading state-based conservative think tanks. The initiative aims to raise awareness of the truly conservative position on criminal justice policy by demonstrating the growing support for effective criminal justice reforms within the conservative movement. This initiative will share research and policy ideas, mobilize conservative leaders, and work to raise public awareness.

Right on Crime couldn't be timelier. With new majorities in 19 state legislatures and hundreds of new lawmakers who pledged to cut spending now taking office, Right on Crime provides conservative principled solutions that are proven to reduce crime, lower costs, and restore victims. For more information, please visit [www.rightoncrime.com](http://www.rightoncrime.com).