



Letters to the Editor – Charleston Post and Courier

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Justice reform

The Post and Courier is right to point out the grave problems of our state's corrections system, and Mayor Joe Riley is to be commended for his efforts to reduce the number of violent crimes in our city. The proposed solutions, well intended as they are, only address part of the problem.

They fail to lessen the chronic overpopulation in our prisons, and they ignore underlying causes of violent crime. We can only be tough on crime if we are also smart about crime.

Our elected officials need to take measures to decriminalize addiction and mental illness, review mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent crimes and find alternative remedies for them. We should not indiscriminately abolish parole and probation.

Smart measures like these would not only lessen the amount of money spent statewide on needless incarceration but would free up resources needed to strengthen our focus on eradicating the violent crimes that plague our streets and neighborhoods.

The ACLU calls for the formation of a non-partisan, expert commission to work with relevant agencies and interested community groups on a comprehensive reform of the criminal justice system. We need solutions that are effective and cost efficient. There is no time to lose or money to waste.

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