



Criminal Justice Reform Questionnaire: *Candidate Responses*
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1. Describe what you consider to be the most pressing needs for reform in the Commonwealth's criminal justice system. Please be as specific as you can.

The three top needs in the criminal justice system are:

- 1) Addressing historic inequities and making the system more fair at every level (arrest, adjudication, sentencing, prison time itself) for Black and Brown people.
- 2) Stopping the school-to-prison pipeline so that children, especially Black and Brown children, do not end up in a cycle of incarceration that they will never be able to break.
- 3) Reducing recidivism by doing a better job of helping the re-entry community re-build their lives after they have left prison.

I have done extensive work to champion reforms that would address these needs, including by passing the law that raised the age at which we are automatically trying children as adults from 14 to 16 (which the Daily Press called a "[sweeping rethinking of how to deal with kids accused of felonies](#)"). The paper also noted I waged a "[three-year campaign](#)" to successfully pass the bill.

I also introduced the [boldest expungement bill in my caucus in 2020](#) so that people with non-violent misdemeanors and non-violent felonies on their records can get jobs and restart their lives, and [I have championed legislation to ban private prisons](#) like the one in Lawrenceville. Private corporations should not be profiting off of the incarceration of human beings.

2. What are your thoughts on solitary confinement, the good time law, and creating a VADOC ombudsman?

Solitary confinement is inhumane and should be banned. There is a bipartisan effort right now in Congress to ban solitary confinement.

Delegate Glenn Davis introduced a bill that limits solitary confinement. For example, an individual must be offered a minimum of four hours of out-of-cell programmatic interventions or other congregate activities per day to promote personal development or address underlying causes of problematic behavior. This is a good step.

I believe in the general concept of a good time law as a means of promoting positive behavior that is likely to reduce recidivism, and I also support creating a VADOC Ombudsman to investigate any reports of abuses within the prison system.

3. Returning citizens are sent back to prison for technical violations more than for any new crimes.

What are your reactions or recommendations?

We must reform the rules governing our re-entry community so that technical violations are not landing people back in prison. Having a comprehensive expungement reform could prevent carrying over old sentences into new ones.