

# Justice Policy INSTITUTE

## 2008 Annual Report

### JPI welcomes new executive director in 2009



This year, Tracy Velázquez became JPI's new executive director. Velázquez was most recently senior program associate at the Vera Institute of Justice's Center on Sentencing and Corrections.

The transition took place in January 2009, when Sheila Bedi returned to justice reform advocacy in the South.

"We are grateful for Sheila's tireless work and the energy she has put into JPI. We wish her the best in her future endeavors," said JPI Board President David Fathi. "We are also very excited to welcome Tracy as the new executive director at JPI. Her research and advocacy experience and dynamic leadership abilities made her the best choice to lead JPI."

"I am excited to join the Justice Policy Institute," said Velázquez. "Spending billions of dollars to incarcerate

millions of people has long been a losing strategy. I'm optimistic that with state and federal budgets stretched thin, policymakers will begin to critically examine these failed and expensive policies that are neither just nor economically justifiable." Velázquez added, "With one in 100 Americans now behind bars and Washington on the cusp of a change agenda, it is time once again for JPI to show there are far better ways than incarceration to improve public safety and strengthen our nation's communities."

Velázquez, a passionate advocate and committed progressive, has been a long-time agent for change in a number of policy arenas. During her tenure at Vera, Velázquez assisted New Jersey policymakers in developing a new model to expand diversion of people with substance abuse problems involved in the criminal justice system. Her research report, "The Pursuit of Safety," examines sex offense policies and their impacts in the United States. Velázquez also worked with the New York State Division of Parole to implement evidence-based supervision practices that improve the success rates of people re-

*(Continued on page 4)*

### KIDS COUNT Essay focuses on juvenile justice

This year, the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *19th National KIDS COUNT Databook* essay focused on juvenile justice reform, highlighting the ways that juvenile justice impacted communities and affected the well-being of children in the United States. The essay focused on the advances made in the juvenile justice field and the work of the Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative.

"As a society, we can not continue to proclaim our country the leader in issues related to justice and equality while operating a system that routinely fails to recognize that children are different from adults ... and that treats youth of color more harshly than their white counterparts," said Bart Lubow, Director of Programs for High Risk Youth at the Annie E. Casey Foundation. "America's juvenile justice systems are poised for a fundamental, urgently needed transformation—and not a moment too soon."

To read the *KIDS COUNT* essay, visit [www.kidscount.org](http://www.kidscount.org)

### Breaking news from JPI

Throughout 2008, the JPI provided key facts and rapid responses to breaking issues. As in previous years, JPI provided a response to the FBI's Uniform Crime Report, noting that violent crime fell in 2007 and that prisons and jails experienced less growth than in previous years. Other responses examined DC crime and arrest statistics, finding that violent crimes reported in the District haven fallen almost consistently for the past seven years and that youth make up less than 20 percent of all arrests for violent offenses.

In September, JPI released three fact sheets on youth sex offending and sex offense registries highlighting the effects registries have on youth, the differences between youth and adult sex offenses and the costs of complying with the Adam Walsh.

To read these fact sheets, visit <http://www.justicepolicy.org/content-hmID=1811&smID=1588.htm>

## Reports in 2008

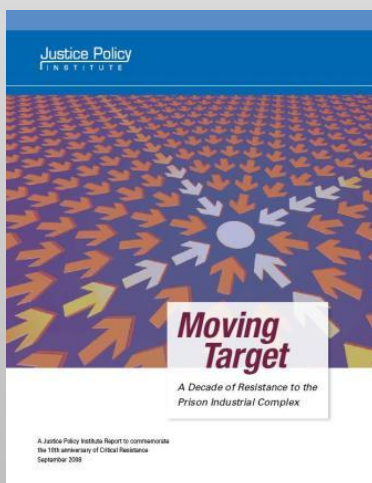


***Jailing Communities: The Impact of Jail Expansion and Effective Public Safety Strategies*** found jail population growth (22 percent), is having serious consequences for communities that are now paying tens of billions of dollars annually to sustain jails. The research found that jails are now warehousing more

people--who have not been found guilty of any crime--for longer periods of time than ever before. The research shows that in part due to the rising costs of bail, people arrested today are much more likely to serve jail time before trial than they would have been 20 years ago, even though crime rates are nearly at the lowest levels in 30 years. Jails are filled with people with drug addictions, the homeless and people charged with immigration offenses. The report concludes that jails have become the "new asylums," with six out of 10 people in jail living with a mental illness.

***Judging Maryland: Baltimore Judges on Effective Solutions to Working with Substance Abusers in the Criminal Justice System*** explores Baltimore's continued reliance on incarceration despite significant state, local, and private investments in a treatment system that is considered a national model.

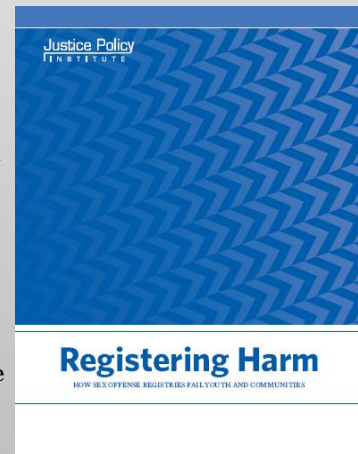
The report's findings are based on two focus group interviews with judges who sit on Baltimore's Circuit and District Courts. According to report findings, inadequate supervision and a shortage of slots in appropriate treatment programs were two of the leading concerns voiced by the judges. Judges also felt that the lack of timely, objective information about the individual's needs, availability of treatment slots, and outcomes at the individual and program level prevent them from identifying appropriate alternatives to incarceration and the proper level of supervision.



***Moving Target: A Decade of Resistance to the Prison Industrial Complex***, a report written to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Critical Resistance, examines the progress of reform 10 years after Critical Resistance first launched its efforts to dismantle the

prison industrial complex (PIC). According to the report, the U.S. prison industrial complex continues to find ways to expand and adapt, despite the fact that a decade-long battle against imprisonment, surveillance, and policing has educated the public about the dangers of imprisonment and helped to slow prison growth. The report was released at the Critical Resistance conference in September.

***Registering Harm: How sex offender registries fail youth and communities*** focuses on the fiscal and public safety issues surrounding sex offense registries under the Adam Walsh Act, a federal law that aims to expand registries at the state level and to require states to list all registrants on the national online database. The report finds that registries create a false sense of security for families who rely on the registry to identify people who might be a threat to their safety and leaves law enforcement tasked with database management rather than community protection. The report also examines the fiscal impact of implementing the Adam Walsh Act on states and finds that all 50 states and the District of Columbia can expect to spend significantly more money implementing the Act than they stand to lose in federal funding if they do not comply.



## JPI in the news

### THE DENVER POST

[Sex-convict database perplexes](#)

Sept. 22, 2008

"We are extremely disturbed that we could be putting kids as young as 14 on this database...What we would like instead is for people on the registry not to get this sort of ostracism and get them the services and opportunities to help reduce recidivism." --Nastassia Walsh, JPI Research Assistant



[New Report on the Expansion of the Prison Industrial Complex](#)

Aug. 19, 2008

"Increasing incarceration is a very minimal part of the public safety effects of what's going on. [What is] more likely, and what is especially relevant right now, is that when unemployment is up, crime tends to go up regardless of what is going on in the prison industrial complex." -Nastassia Walsh, JPI Research Assistant.

### CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

[Suicidal driver a model of bias in justice system](#)

Sept. 25, 2008

"Even the people who spit fire whenever I bring up the racial bias in our criminal justice system ought to be able to see that [ex-model Jeanette Sliwinski] benefitted from that bias. But don't take my word for it. The Washington, D.C.-based Justice Policy Institute has released a shocking report about America's prison population. "The stark racial disproportionality of drug imprisonment rates suggests that drug policy is laden with overt racial bias," the [report, *Moving Target*, concluded."



[Putting Prisoners to Work](#)

Aug. 19, 2008

"Anything that creates a market incentive to lock people up undermines the very purpose of our criminal justice system." -Sheila Bedi, Executive Director of the Justice Policy Institute



[JPI to States: Ignore Adam Walsh Act](#)

Dec. 4, 2008

The Justice Policy Institute just released "Registering Harm," a thorough report on the problems with the Walsh Act. It presents a bold idea for states: Don't comply.



[Divert more drug users](#) March 9, 2008

"The nearly two dozen district and circuit judges who sat down with researchers from the Justice Policy Institute described a revolving-door system in which heroin and cocaine users are often involved in a cycle of catch, jail and release - without getting treatment that would help them break it."



[Report: Jails not for mentally ill](#)

March 31, 2008

"The county's jail plan is necessary, but it's not sufficient," Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky said. "The Justice Policy Institute report goes beyond it, which is how do we deal with a growing population of people in our county jails who really need other kinds of help other than incarceration, whether it's services for homeless people, those with mental health issues or substance abuse issues."

## What's next for JPI?

In 2009, the Justice Policy Institute will be focusing on a wide range of projects on both the state and national level. JPI will release two reports in Maryland: a description of the great strides Maryland has made in parole services and recommendations on improvements that can still be made; and the documentation project, which will tell the stories of the impact of incarceration and the war on drugs on Maryland communities. JPI will also publish two more briefs in its series on public safety, and re-release each of the 2008 briefs with California-specific information. In a new state-level collaboration, JPI's researchers will begin providing focused technical assistance to several states on ways to reduce incarceration rates and racial disparities.

## Other publications

### Collaborative Work and Survey

#### Development

Over the course of 2008, JPI worked with a range of organizations to promote fair and rational justice policies. Some of these projects include:

- Collaboration with The Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ) to document states' compliance with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP). JPI administered a comprehensive survey to State Advisory Groups in all 56 states and territories that CJJ will use to develop a practice guide and inform their efforts.
- A report on the state of juvenile justice, *Juvenile Justice Reform: Unlocking the Future of our Communities*, which was published as a chapter in the NAACP report *One Voice, One Vote*. The report summarized the issues facing youth in seven southern states, including Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, and North and South Carolina.
- Communications work in conjunction with the Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana and Color of Change to inform the public of the latest information regarding the Jena 6 proceedings.
- A partnership with Justice Maryland and the Drug Policy Alliance to produce a community-based project that will document the devastating effects of incarceration on communities, families and civic institutions in Baltimore City.



### Public Safety Briefs

Through the second half of 2007 and early 2008, the Justice Policy Institute produced a series of policy briefs addressing various public policies and their effects on public safety.

- **Substance Abuse Treatment and Public Safety** found that community-based substance abuse treatment reduces crime rates and helps states reduce corrections costs. Furthermore, the sooner substance abuse is treated, the bigger the long-term cost savings and increases in public safety, according to research.
- **The Housing and Public Safety** brief found that increased availability of quality, affordable or supportive housing is associated with public safety benefits. States that spent more on housing experienced lower incarceration rates than those states that spent less.
- **In Employment, Wages and Public Safety**, researchers found that increased employment is associated with positive public safety outcomes. States that had higher levels of employment also had crime rates lower than the national average.
- **Education and Public Safety** found that states that invest more in education have lower rates of violent crime and incarceration. States that made bigger investments in higher education saw better public safety outcomes. Of the 10 states that saw the biggest increases in higher education expenditure, eight saw violent crime rates decline, and five saw violent crime decline more than the national average.

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entering the community from prison.

As former executive director of the Montana Mental Health Association, she worked to secure additional funding for mental health and suicide prevention, and to reduce the criminalization of people with mental illness. Prior to that, she co-founded Commonweal Consulting, a consulting firm providing strategic capacity-building services to non-profits and public agencies. Velázquez also ran for U.S. Congress and served as Vice Chair of the Montana Democratic Party. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Harvard University and a Master of Public Administration from Montana State University.

# Models for Change

Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice

JPI received a *Champion for Change Award* from the Models for Change from Illinois for being the most valuable NRB member for contributions to the Illinois work.

## Report highlights Illinois' successes in juvenile justice reform efforts

As part of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change initiative, the Juvenile Justice Initiative of Illinois released a report demonstrating that the 2005 repeal of a state law that once forced children accused of drug offenses into adult criminal courts has not compromised public safety. Instead, hundreds of Illinois youth have received a greater opportunity to turn their lives around.

Following the repeal of the automatic drug transfer law, the number of youth automatically sent to adult courts was lowered by two-thirds, with no detrimental impact on public safety. There was also no increase in juvenile court caseloads or waivers to adult courtrooms, according to *Changing Course: A Review of the First Two Years of Drug Transfer Reform in Illinois*.

The repeal of the automatic drug transfer law put Illinois back in the national spotlight for reform of juvenile justice policy based on data, evidence-based practices and fairness.

Based on the success of the repeal, the report recommends additional reforms, including enhanced rehabilitative programs for youth, differences in sentencing for youth and adults, and the delegation of authority to juvenile court judges to determine which juvenile cases should be transferred to adult courts.

For more information on the Models for Change initiative, visit [www.modelsforchange.net](http://www.modelsforchange.net). For more information on *Changing Course*, go to [www.jjustice.org](http://www.jjustice.org).

## JPI develops new Models for Change website

Using extensive research, interviews and analysis, the Justice Policy Institute worked with the Chicago-based website design firm Webitects to completely redesign the Models for Change website. The new and improved site showcases the success and progress of the Models for Change initiative, allows for easier use by Models for Change participants, and provides a clearer and more current picture of the work to broader audiences.



The first phase of the site's development was unveiled at the initiative's annual meeting in December 2008, and included a redesign of the public face of the site, as well as the addition of select tools that allow sites to become more involved in the process. New features include a calendar that community members can update with national and local events, a new publications section with cover thumbnails and abstracts, and advanced search features that include the capability to search within PDF documents. The site should be available to the public in early spring 2009.

## JPI analyzes Clinton crime plan during Democratic primaries

In Spring 2008, at the height of the Democratic presidential primaries, the Justice Policy Institute announced that presidential candidate Hillary Clinton's anti-crime package ignored critical research that finds that investments in employment, education, housing and treatment for those who need it is the most effective and fiscally-responsible way to improve public safety. Clinton's proposal to revive former President Clinton's COPS initiative, which calls for investments in policing, would increase prison populations and may have a negative impact on the nation's poor and people of color, without significantly reducing crime. The Clinton Administration's "tough on crime" policies resulted in the largest increases in federal and state prison populations of any president in American history. Advocates say re-implementing this agenda would be a return to bad policies.

In 2009, the COPS program is on the political agenda again with the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, President Obama's stimulus package. The bill, as passed by Congress, earmarks \$1 billion for hiring law enforcement officers under the COPS program and an additional \$2 billion for state and local law enforcement assistance through the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program. Prior to the bill's adoption by the House, the Justice Policy Institute and 15 allied organizations released a letter to members of Congress expressing concern over the bill and the belief that focusing funding on law enforcement is not the most effective way to stimulate the economy or improve public safety.

**The Justice Policy Institute (JPI) is dedicated to ending society's reliance on incarceration and to promoting effective solutions to social problems.**

In the last twenty years, our nation has witnessed an unprecedented growth in its prison population, making the country's incarceration rates the highest in the world. As politicians promised to get "tough on crime", prison beds filled, often with people with social problems like mental health or addiction issues that could be better treated elsewhere. Now, the country struggles to pay for over two million people in prison and jail, most of whom will eventually be released. The time has come for better solutions.

As prison populations grow and financial resources diminish, attitudes towards prisons are changing. Over half the states in the country have moved away from the excessively punitive policies of the past in favor of approaches that support treatment and community-based alternatives, while saving money, promoting safety and building communities. Smarter alternatives exist that cost less money and are more effective at rehabilitating people. But prison and jail populations continue to rise, and more work must be done.

Since 1997, the Justice Policy Institute has worked to enhance the public dialog on incarceration through accessible research, public education, and communications advocacy. Lawmakers, media, advocates, systems reformers and the general public rely on JPI's timely analysis. JPI was named one of the 25 most quoted progressive non-profits in the country by FAIR magazine.



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**Your financial help allows us to build momentum for change!**

The Justice Policy Institute prides itself on being able to give policymakers, the media and the general public independent research and analysis of criminal justice and juvenile justice issues. Our independence and our work depends on private donations from people and foundations across the country. You can help us to reduce America's reliance on incarceration as a solution to social problems and to build stronger communities by making a donation to the Justice Policy Institute. Your donation is tax deductible. With a new administration and policymakers facing tough budget choices, there has never been a more important time for JPI's voice to be heard. Thank you!

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