

STATE QUESTION 805 IS COMMON-SENSE, CONSERVATIVE REFORM.

Oklahoma's criminal justice system is ineffective, costly, and overcrowded. As national leaders of the conservative movement for criminal justice reform, we are proud to support State Question 805 to help address Oklahoma's incarceration crisis. SQ 805 is a common-sense reform that will limit the use of harsh and ineffective repeat sentence penalties for nonviolent offenses.

Oklahoma continues to have one of the highest imprisonment rates in the country and repeat sentence penalties for nonviolent offenses is a large reason why. Compared to other states, people in Oklahoma spend nearly 70% longer in prison for nonviolent property crimes and 79% longer for drug crimes. The state's Department of Corrections budget costs taxpayers over half a billion dollars each year.

Far too often we've seen these enhancements applied indiscriminately by prosecutors for all types of offenses, and lead to costly and ineffective sentences. Long sentences tear apart families and limit opportunities for people to seek redemption and reach their full potential. They also impose a huge and unnecessary cost to taxpayers. Yet, research continues to show that long prison sentences like these do not make communities safer.

It doesn't have to be this way. SQ 805 would help reduce Oklahoma's prison population by 8.5% over the next 10 years and is expected to save taxpayers at least \$142 million. This means more people in the workforce and more families reunited. And money otherwise spent keeping people behind bars can be reallocated to addiction treatment, victim's services, workforce development, or back in taxpayer's pockets.

SQ 805 is supported by a diverse coalition of business and faith leaders, service providers, Republican and Democratic lawmakers, former prosecutors, and formerly incarcerated people. Conservatives in Oklahoma and across America are working to reform the criminal justice system to make it more effective for victims, families, and people involved in the system, while reducing costs to taxpayers. Accordingly, we write today in support of SQ 805 to further these efforts.

Respectfully,

David Safavian, *American Conservative Union Foundation*

Grover Norquist, *Americans for Tax Reform*

Timothy Head, *Faith & Freedom Coalition*

Arthur Rizer, *R Street Institute*



**YES ON
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