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PROSECUTORS ANNOUNCE GROUNDBREAKING RESENTENCING EFFORTS TO REDUCE U.S. MASS INCARCERATION EPIDEMIC *20,000 individuals eligible to be considered for resentencing in California*

LOS ANGELES—Today, elected prosecutors in two major cities joined a [growing movement](#) to take a second look at past extreme sentences that no longer comport with just results, squander limited government resources on incarcerating individuals who could safely return to the community, and contribute to a mass incarceration crisis in this nation.

Newly elected Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón and Baltimore City State’s Attorney Marilyn Mosby announced today expansive efforts to reconsider thousands of decades-long harsh sentences. District Attorney Gascón, in [remarks](#) delivered during his inauguration ceremony today, [announced](#) that the largest prosecutor's office in America will not file sentencing enhancements, will abandon the use of three-strikes charging policies and will no longer prosecute children as adults. Likewise in Baltimore, State’s Attorney Marilyn Mosby [announced today a new sentencing review unit](#) that will review certain past sentences to identify individuals the office believes should be released.

At a time when prisons are among the nation’s largest COVID-19 hotspots, these resentencing efforts that bookend the nation – and are reflective of new thinking sweeping the field of prosecution – are a significant step to address prison overcrowding, reduce incarceration and save the lives of those behind bars, as well as personnel who work in these facilities.

“Over the past few decades, our nation has doled out excessive sentences out of alignment with other nations and that have not made our communities any safer. If we want to break the destructive cycle of mass incarceration, we must embrace resentencing measures that offer individuals who have been behind bars for years – and who no longer pose a danger to our community – the opportunity for a second chance,” said **Miriam Krinsky, Executive Director of [Fair and Just Prosecution](#)** and a former federal prosecutor. “It is heartening to see a growing number of reform-minded elected prosecutors who recognize their obligation as ministers of justice to address not simply past convictions in need of correction, but also past extreme *sentences*.”

SA Mosby and DA Gascón join a host of other prosecutors around the nation – including **King County (Seattle) Prosecuting Attorney Dan Satterberg** and **District Attorneys Chesa Boudin (San Francisco), Eric Gonzalez (Brooklyn), Larry Krasner (Philadelphia) and Rachael Rollins (Boston)** – in establishing [sentencing review units or processes](#). These reforms are supported by a wealth of evidence demonstrating that individuals [age out of crime](#), even if convicted of serious offenses. Resentencing efforts also promote public safety by allowing communities to focus

resources on prevention and [successful reentry](#), rather than costly incarceration of individuals who have been behind bars for years and no longer pose a threat to others. Decarceration is also [essential](#) to slow the spread of the coronavirus among not simply those housed in overcrowded prison facilities, but also personnel who work there and return to their loved ones at the end of each shift.

Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón made clear that his new charging and sentencing policies will be applied retroactively, enabling what some estimate to be *20,000 or more* people to be eligible for consideration for resentencing – a number that amounts to one-fifth of the state’s total prison population. State’s Attorney Mosby’s new sentencing review unit is similarly groundbreaking -- the office will both review past sentences to ensure that just results are achieved, and also offer victims of crime and their next of kin the ability to participate in a restorative justice process with the goal of bringing about healing and closure.

“The pursuit of justice is timeless, therefore this policy will correct historic wrongs,” said **District Attorney Gascón**. “Mass incarceration has broken families and trapped communities in cycles of trauma and poverty. We must begin undoing those failed policies by taking a second look at extreme sentences.”

State legislatures are similarly embracing these reforms and creating vehicles to allow for the reexamination of harsh sentences. In 2018, California lawmakers [passed a bill](#) allowing DAs and correctional agencies to reevaluate past sentences and recommend that a court reduce the sentence. In Washington, a law enacted this year gives prosecutors [discretion](#) to petition the court to resentence an individual if the person's sentence no longer advances the interests of justice.

“A prosecutor’s duty to do justice extends backward as well as forward. We should not be reluctant to reconcile past practice with current standards, and reduce sentences to meet our current view of justice and accountability. And we especially need to embrace resentencing at a time when crowded conditions and limited medical care inside jails and prisons allow COVID-19 to rapidly spread,” said **Prosecuting Attorney for King County (Seattle) Dan Satterberg**, one of the vocal supporters of the Washington state reforms. “Reducing prison populations doesn’t just save lives behind bars, it protects entire communities.”

Pervasive support for sentencing review across party lines and geographic regions underscores the momentum behind the growing movement to revisit harsh past sentences. [Polling conducted earlier this year](#) showed that 69% of voters – including 64% of Republicans – support “states adopting laws that allow for the re-examination of old sentences to provide a second chance for people who have been in prison for more than ten years and who can be safely returned to the community.” And 67% support “elected prosecutors reexamining past sentences to provide a second chance to people who have been in prison for ten years or longer and who can be safely returned to the community.” As this polling illustrates, sentencing review is a vital strategy for undoing mass incarceration – supported by evidence, criminal justice leaders, and, now, a majority of the American electorate.

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