



# Crime in Louisiana

**ANALYZING THE DATA**



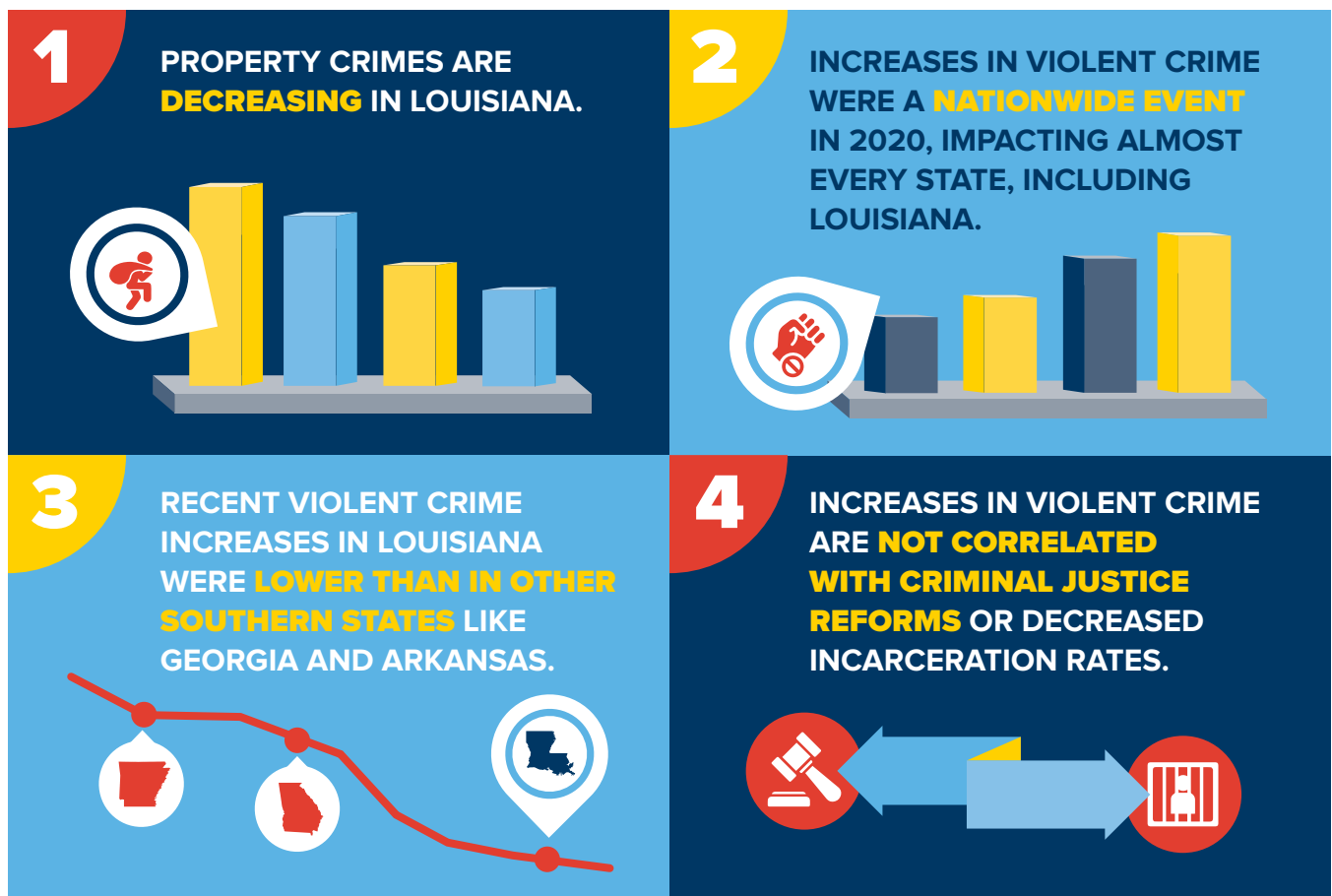


# Crime in Louisiana

This year, disturbing reports of increased crime have dominated the news, both in Louisiana and nationally.

**Crime is a serious issue that demands thoughtful solutions to deter criminal behavior and promote public safety.** They should be guided by data and evidence, not anecdotes. That's why Pelican set out to review and better understand the underlying data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Report and Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Comparing Louisiana's crime data with other states' paints a more complete picture of the scale of the problem and its potential causes. The following analysis will show that, when examining the data on crime in Louisiana, **four important conclusions can be drawn:**



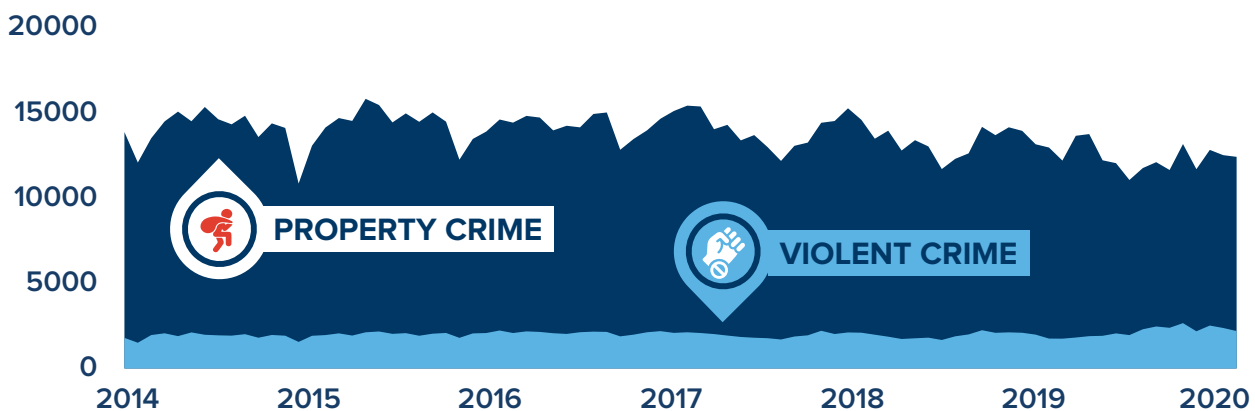
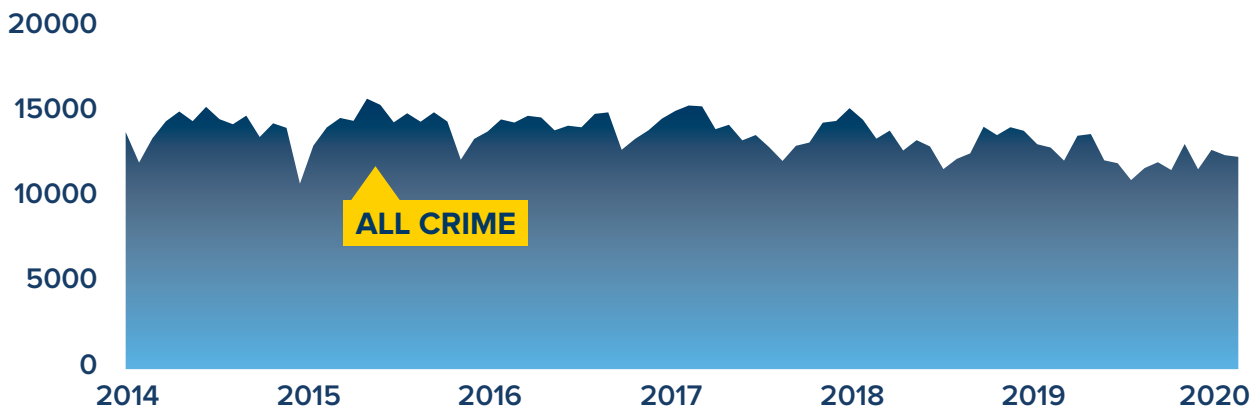
These conclusions support a massive body of evidence demonstrating that **recent Louisiana reforms are not the culprit**, and that **smart criminal justice reforms**, if implemented well, will lead to increased public safety in Louisiana.

# How Does Louisiana Compare?

Over the last six years, crime rates in Louisiana remained relatively stable, trending down starting in 2019.

**Louisiana's property crime rate decreased by 30% over the last 20 years.** While motor vehicle theft increased over the last five years, burglary decreased by 23% from June 2017 to December 2019, with other thefts trending downward as well. **Overall, these numbers represent a decrease in property crime in Louisiana since 2017. Violent crime rates in Louisiana remained relatively constant from 2014 through 2019, with a sharp increase in 2020.** This increase was driven primarily by increases in murder and aggravated assault. Robberies declined 25% from 2017 to 2020.

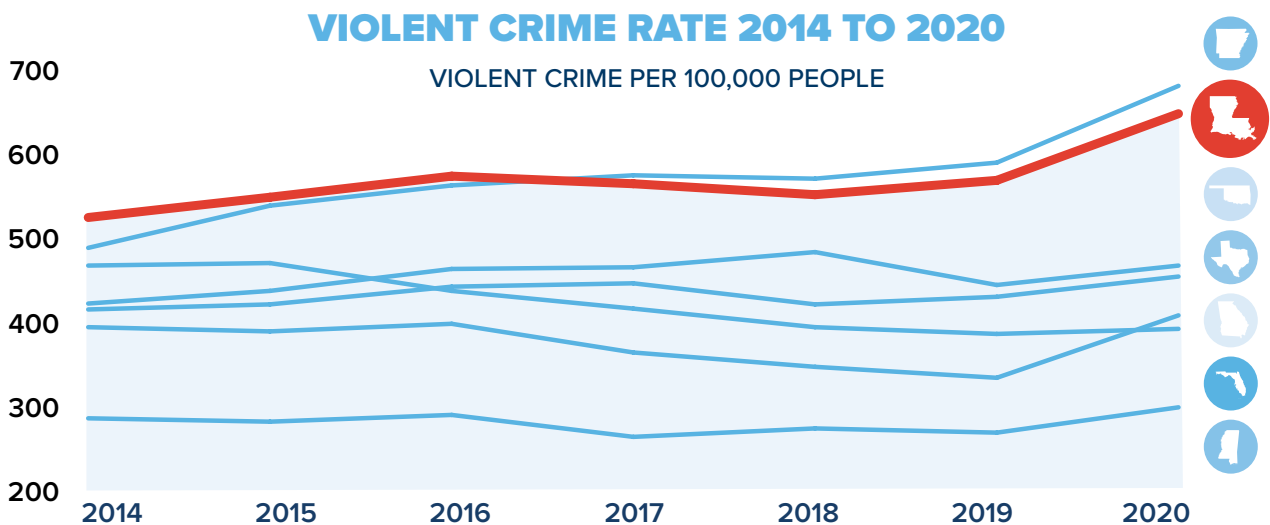
## CRIME IN LOUISIANA 2014 TO 2020



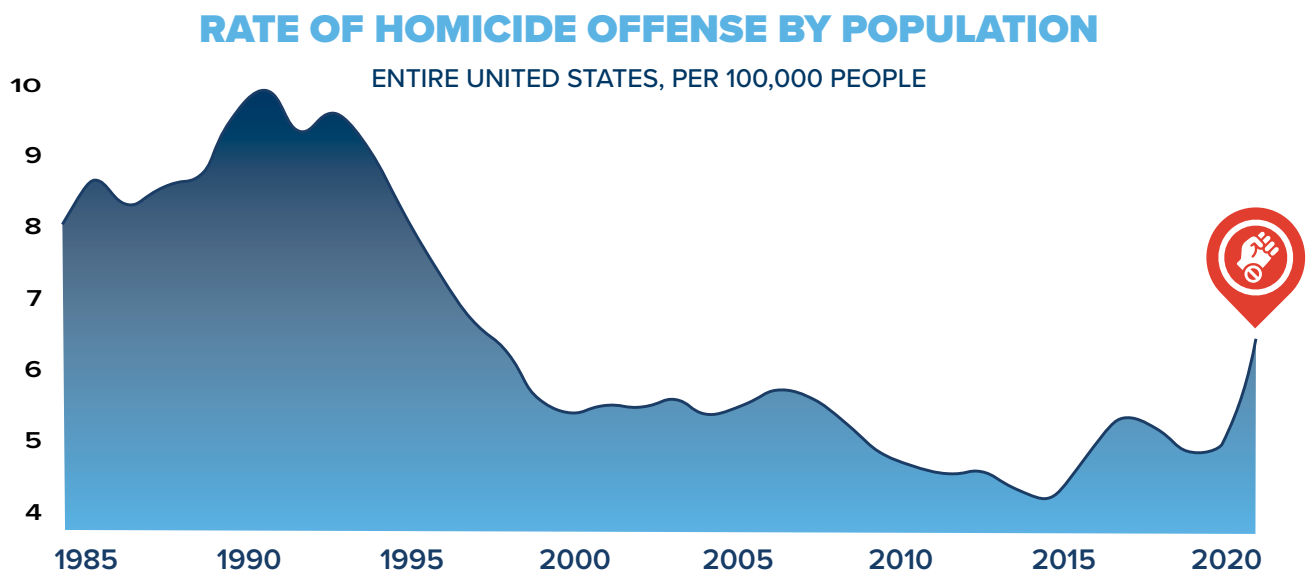
# Compared to other States

Despite differences in legal reforms and incarceration rates, violent crime has increased across seven other Southern states as well.

While its baseline is higher than many comparison states, **Louisiana's violent crime spike is lower than other states and mirrors regional trends.** Georgia and Arkansas saw the largest increases in violent crimes during this period.



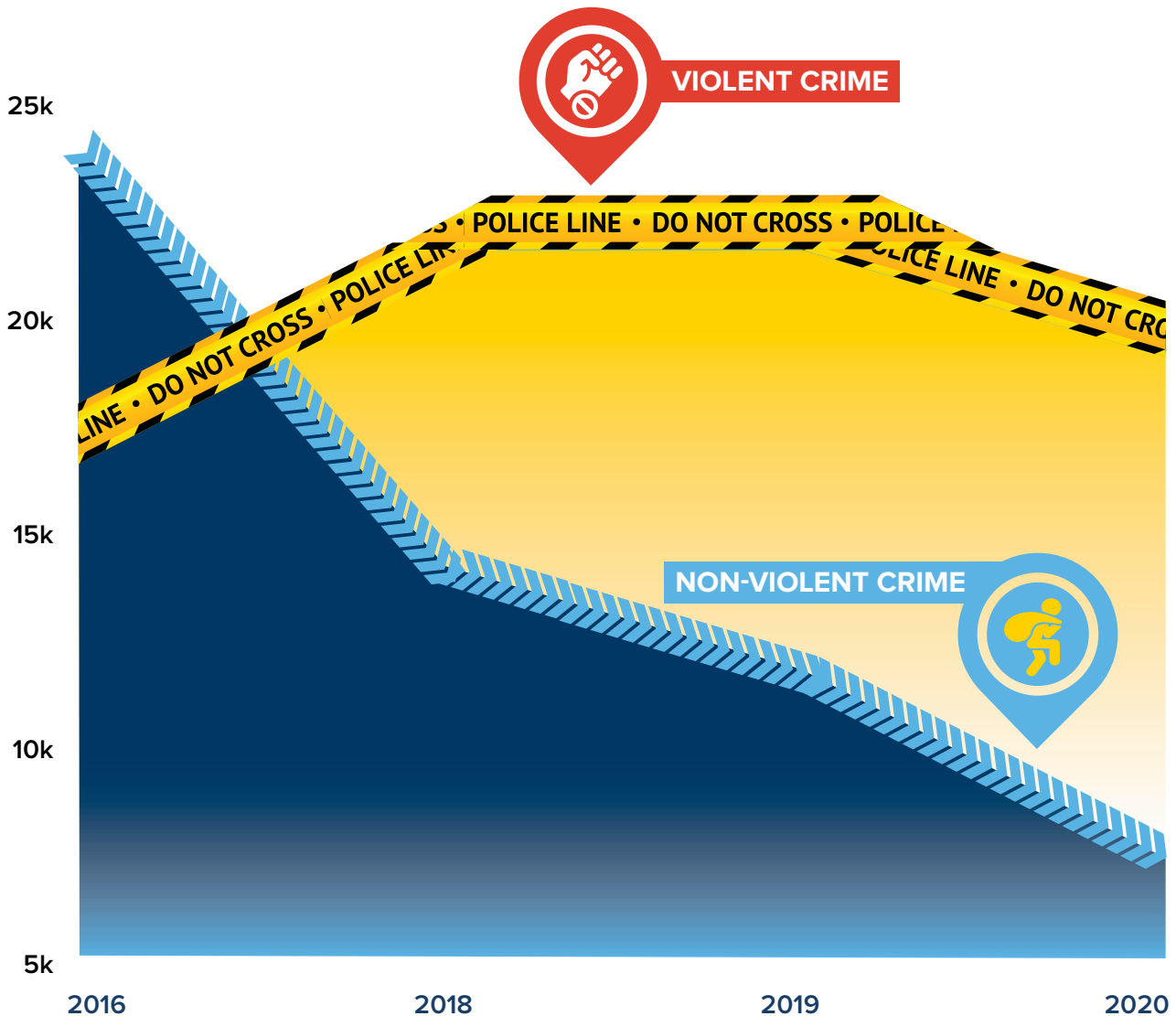
The increase in murders in 2020 was not unique to Louisiana. Murders increased by nearly 30% nationwide over the course of 2020. **The data shows that this is a national phenomenon, not a problem specific to the Pelican State.** Murders have been on the decline since peaking in 1991, but that trend reversed in 2020 with a spike in murders across the country.



# Hard Data from Recent Criminal Justice Reforms

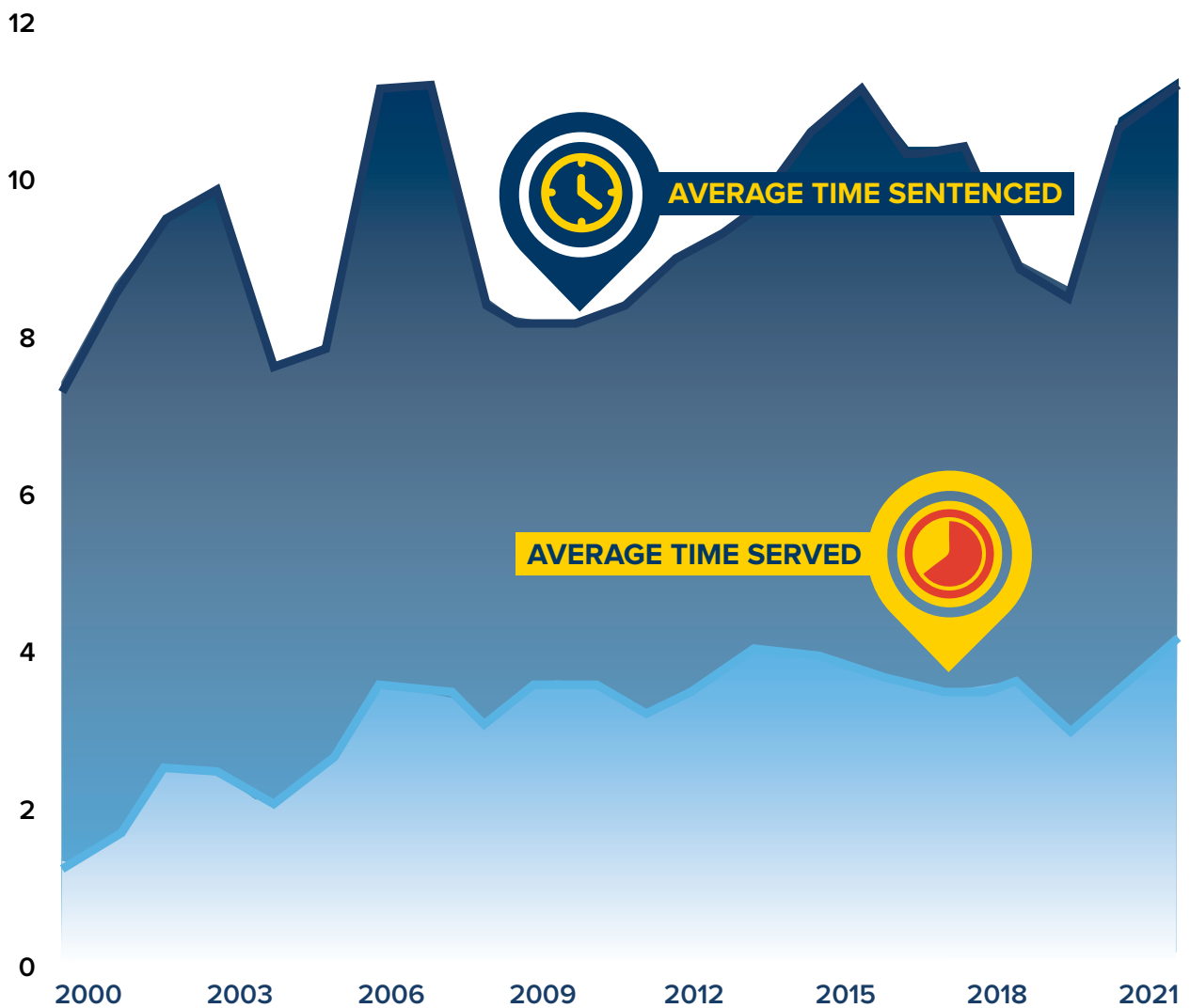
Louisiana's recent criminal justice reforms have **refocused prison beds and resources where they're most needed** – on violent criminals, not those committing nonviolent offenses

## LOUISIANA PRISON POPULATION



The data clearly shows that while Louisiana’s nonviolent offender prison population has been diverted to more cost-efficient alternatives, **the amount of time served by serious violent offenders in Louisiana has increased between 2000 and 2021.**

### DPS&C RELEASES BY CONVICTION TYPE: VIOLENT CRIME



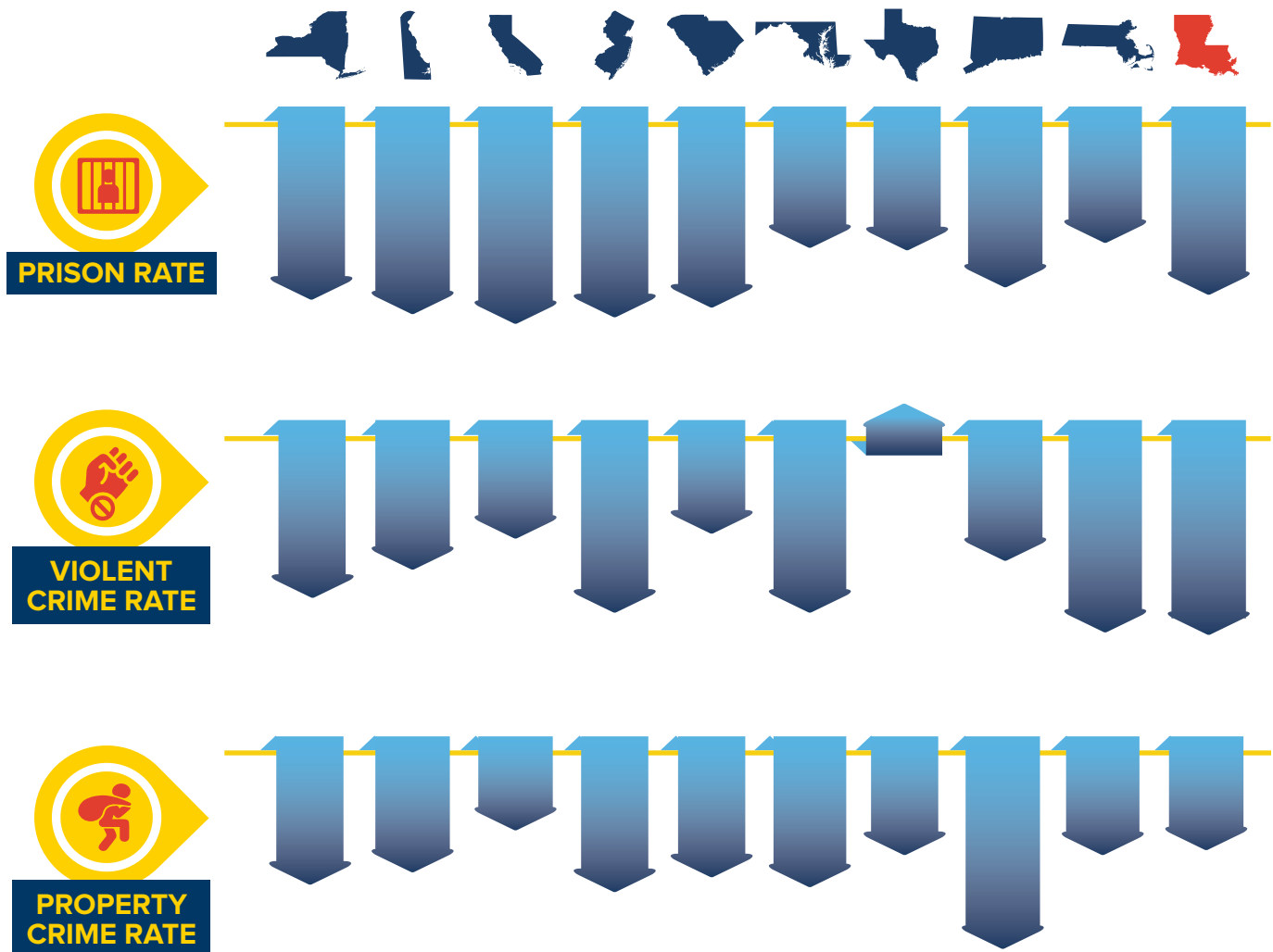
These reforms are more effectively improving public safety by reducing criminal activity and reducing recidivism.

# The Truth About Incarceration Rates and Public Safety

Higher incarceration rates aren't necessarily an indicator of increased public safety. In fact, incarceration and crime rates have both decreased substantially over the past 20 years nationally and in Louisiana.

Below is the percent change in incarceration rate, violent crime, and property crime rate for the 10 states that had the largest prison population declines per capita from 2000 to 2019. Property crime fell for all 10 states during that time and violent crime fell in all but one state.

## CHANGES IN PRISON POPULATION AND CRIME, 2000 TO 2019

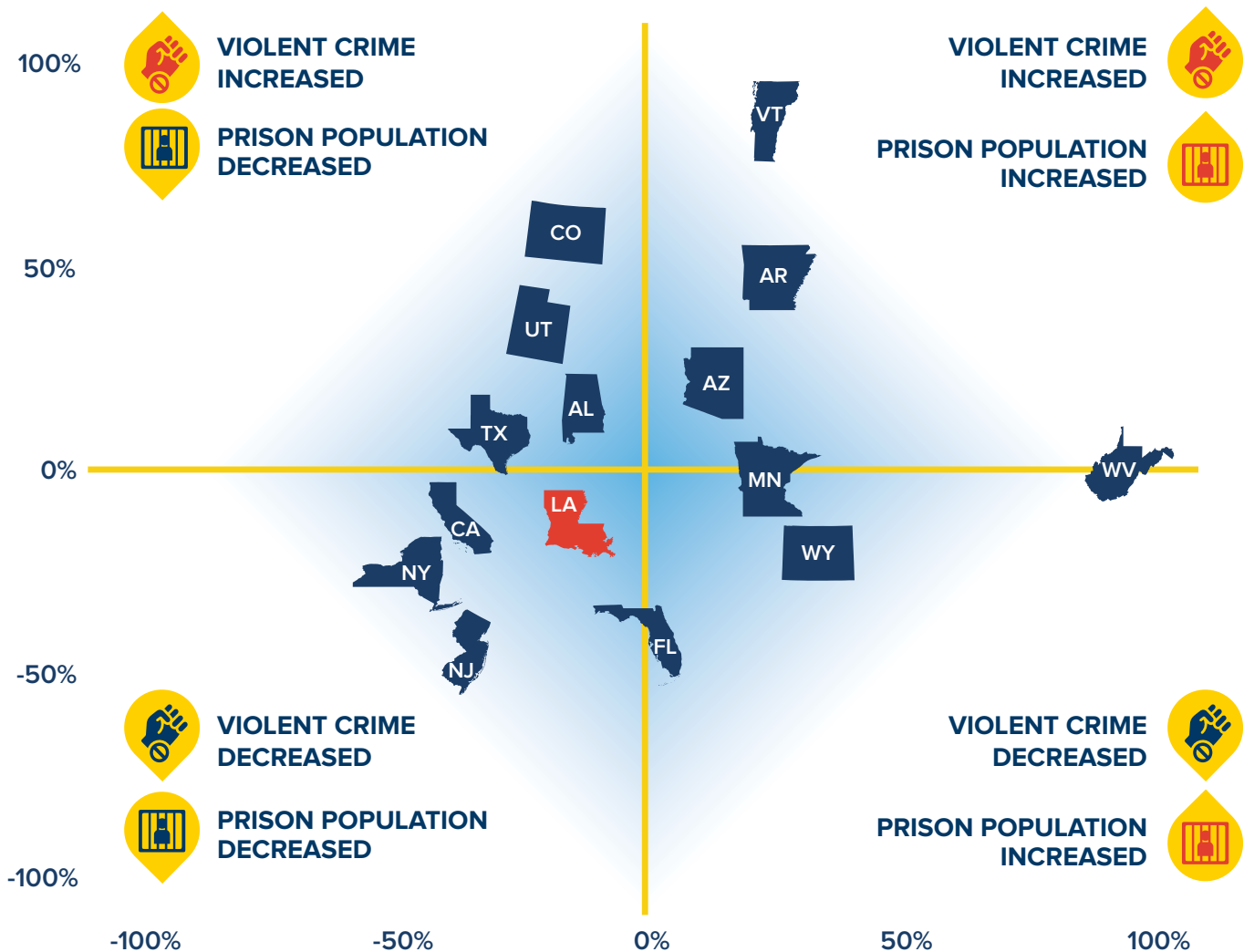




Most states that reduced their prison populations experienced decreased violent crime rates from 2000 to 2019. States that increased their prison population tended to see increased violent crime rates. Rarely did a state with a growing prison population experience less violent crime.

## A COMPARISON OF CHANGE IN VIOLENT CRIME AND INCARCERATION BY STATE

RATES PER 100,000 RESIDENTS



Statistically, these changes over time cannot be causally linked, meaning that changing incarceration rates over time does not directly affect crime rates, but it does suggest that **reducing incarceration and reducing crime can be carried out independently.**

# Conclusion

Louisiana's state and local leaders can reduce crime and increase public safety by taking the following steps:

1

**PROPERLY FUND  
THE POLICE**



2

**FOCUS LAW ENFORCEMENT  
TIME AND RESOURCES ON  
PREVENTING AND SOLVING  
THE MOST SERIOUS CRIMES**



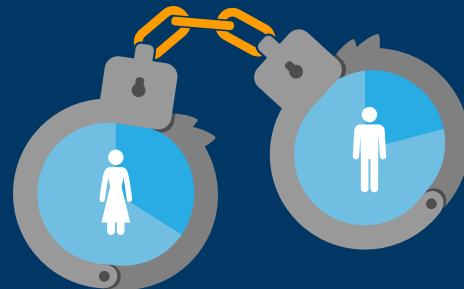
3

**FOCUS ON EVIDENCE-  
BASED STRATEGIES  
THAT REDUCE VIOLENT  
CRIME**



4

**CONTINUE TO ENACT SMART  
ON CRIME POLICIES THAT  
INCREASE PUBLIC SAFETY  
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
SYSTEM SUCCESS**



# Methodology

## **The 2017 Criminal Justice Reform and Crime in Louisiana**

There are 317 unique law enforcement agencies in Louisiana that reported crime data for at least one month to the FBI between January 2014 and December 2020. Of those, 185 agencies reported complete data and were included in this analysis.

## **Recent violent crime spikes in Louisiana compared to Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Oklahoma, Florida and Georgia.**

The FBI estimates crime counts for each state based on the share of agencies within a state that report in a given year. Some states are more consistent with ensuring compliance with FBI reporting practices. The FBI's 2020 estimates for Florida, for example, were based on agencies reporting data covering over 95% of the state's population. Reporting practices are generally similarly strong in Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. Reporting practices are less strong in Alabama and Georgia. Reporting in Mississippi is generally abysmal, causing the FBI to estimate crime totals for most of the state. In 2020, for example, agencies covering only 62 percent of Mississippi's population reported data to the FBI.

Source: F.B.I. annual estimates, 2014-2020.

Crime and incarceration rates over the last 20 years.

The data included in this analysis is the year-end population of the total custody population by state.

This analysis does not include any information from the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) crime data release for 2021. Only 19 percent of eligible agencies in Louisiana submitted a full 12-months of data to the FBI in 2021 and only 46 percent of Louisiana law enforcement agencies submitted any data at all. Analysis of statewide trends for 2021, therefore, is not possible.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Corrections Statistics Analysis Tool.



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