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Providing returning citizens with IDs and other essential documents can facilitate the reentry process

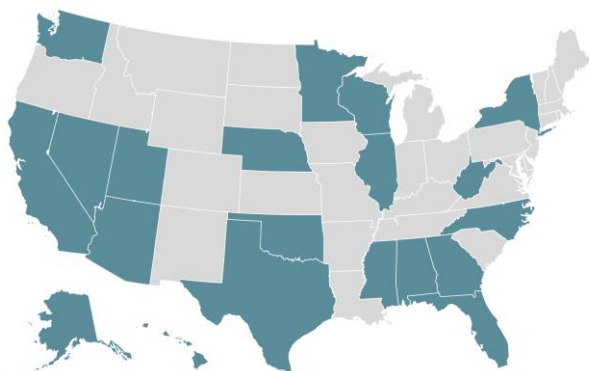
Over 80% of prisoners will eventually be released and roughly 500,000 people are released from prison each year. A government-issued ID is essential for gaining access to employment, housing, education, and financial services, but prisoners are often released without valid IDs. Providing returning citizens with IDs and other essential documents is a common-sense policy for facilitating their successful reentry into the community.

Barriers to reentry contribute to high rates of recidivism.

- Nationwide, more than 80% of released state prisoners recidivate, or are rearrested, within eight years of their release. About 70% are reconvicted and 60% return to incarceration over that same period.
- Repeated involvement with the justice system results in more victims, weakens civil institutions, separates families, dampens economic productivity, and wastes tax dollars.
- Research indicates that access to gainful employment and stable housing arrangements are key to reducing the likelihood that prisoners will recidivate after their release from prison.

States can facilitate successful reentry by requiring Corrections Agencies to do the following:

- Coordinate with relevant agencies to issue valid identification documents to returning citizens before they are released
- Provide inmates with copies of their social security cards and birth certificates
- Provide inmates with their vocational training and work records
- Deliver practice job interview programming and provide inmates with certificates upon completion
- Notify inmates if they are eligible to apply for an occupational license or certification



Only 20 states have laws aimed at providing returning citizens with IDs

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