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Kansans for Smart Justice Calls for Criminal Justice Reform

Broad coalition forms in support of common sense updates to criminal justice laws

TOPEKA, Kan. (February 29, 2016) – Kansans for Smart Justice today unveiled a comprehensive package of reforms that will help fix the state’s badly broken criminal justice system that puts too many people in jail and costs taxpayers too much money.

“The criminal justice system in Kansas is broken and urgently needs reform,” said Micah Kubic, executive director of the ACLU of Kansas. “Kansans for Smart Justice envisions a criminal justice system that reduces the number of incarcerated people, uses taxpayer dollars wisely, invests in safe and strong communities, and respects the rights of all who come into contact with it.”

This new, broad coalition – made up of civil rights, faith-based, social service, and community improvement organizations from across the political and ideological spectrum – is unveiling a “Smart Justice Agenda” that calls for common sense changes to Kansas’ criminal justice system that will make communities safer, save taxpayers money and reduce incarceration at the same time.

The Smart Justice Agenda includes:

- Expanding the use of diversion programs, including support for HB 2681, a bill encouraging diversion that passed a Kansas House committee but is awaiting a vote on the House floor
- Reducing sentences for non-violent drug crimes
- Improving re-entry and recidivism prevention services
- Reforming civil asset forfeiture laws

The Kansans for Smart Justice coalition includes:

AdHoc Group Against Crime
American Civil Liberties Union of Kansas
Brown Foundation
Communities Creating Opportunity
Kansas Appleseed

Kansas Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
Kansas Black Leadership Council
MainStream Coalition
NAACP – Kansas State Conference of Branches
Reaching Out From Within
Sunflower Community Action
United Church of Christ, Kansas-Oklahoma Conference
Urban League of Greater Kansas City

For more information, visit www.smartjusticekansas.org.

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