



To our neighbors across Vermont:

We need a public safety system that values and respects the health, dignity, and well-being of all. But for decades, our public officials have instead built a system of mass incarceration fueled by over-policing, racism, and fear-mongering. The results have been disastrous.

In recent years, Vermonters have rejected that failed approach and made progress towards a smarter justice system. **We know that investing in people and communities over policing and prisons makes our state safer and more equitable.**

Still, some of our public officials are promoting false narratives to stoke fear and justify a return to the failed policies of the so-called “tough on crime” era. We’ve been down that road before, and we’re not going back.

Let’s be clear: Crime is down, but it still impacts our communities, and often it’s the most vulnerable who suffer. And that’s why we must prioritize more effective solutions: affordable housing, mental healthcare, drug treatment, and other community-based support systems. By contrast, we know that criminalizing poverty and reverting to the tools of over-policing and incarceration will not bring our communities the safety or justice they deserve.

The stakes could not be higher this year. Beginning with the August 9th primary, Vermont voters will have a choice between forward-thinking, data-driven, effective reforms that reflect our values, and the harmful, counter-productive policies that have failed our communities for too long.

This election year, we urge you to ask the candidates which of these approaches they favor. **Then, vote.**