Mary Grimes, Section 4 Word Count: 475

Jim Webb

Reconstructing the National Criminal Justice System

 Sen. Jim Webb, D-Virginia, wants to reconstruct the national criminal justice system by introducing the National Criminal Justice Commission Act of 2009. **(NEWS)**

 The National Criminal Justice Commission Act seeks to “recalculate who goes to prison and for how long and of how we address the long-term consequences of incarceration,” according to Webb’s Web site. **(CONTEXT)**

 Webb said that the United States has a quarter of the prison population, which is more than five times higher than the rest of the world. **(SCOPE)**

 “Keeping people in prison who do not need to be there is unjust and enormously expensive, which makes the problem a priority right now. Hard-pressed states and localities that reduce prison costs will have more money to help the unemployed, avert layoffs of teachers and police officers, and keep hospitals operating,” according to a New York Times Editorial. **(IMPACT)**

Support for this Bill, which was introduced in March, is continually growing. Webb’s primary objective is to have the National Criminal Justice Commission Act enacted within the year. If enacted, the criminal justice system will conduct an 18-month review involving suggestions for correction. **(Edge)**

 The National Criminal Justice Commission Act is primarily a plan to reconstruct the criminal justice system in order to spend less money, target the right offenders and sentence fair punishments for committed crimes.

Unjust sentences for crimes have caused the United States to have record-setting incarceration rates with more than “1 in 100 adults incarcerated,” Webb said. It is vital to cut down these rates in order to cut expenses. The Bill suggests the reconstruction of crime sentences as a way to save money.

“In the last two decades, according to a Pew Charitable Trusts report, state corrections spending soared 127 percent,” Webb said.

Along with cost-effectiveness, the Bill also focuses on decreasing prison violence, improving prison administration, creating a system to help prisoners reenter society, improving the treatment for the mentally ill, and increasing sentences for gang related activity such as drug distribution.

 “Webb has said more emphasis is required to target those who perpetrate violence such as gang members and less emphasis on small time targets like drug offenders and parole violators.” This will not only help control the amount of people incarcerated, but also help define the severity of crime sentences, according to a DC Examiner editorial.

 Dallas South is an organization whose goal is to promote the image of African-Americans in the media. The editor of Dallas South said, “The only way to really impact and this flawed system is through policy change. I thank Dallas South Family members L.W. and The Seed planter for making me aware of proposed legislation from Virginia Sen. Jim Webb.”

 “This legislation has already garnered wide bipartisan support in Congress and from interest groups representing a range of backgrounds and political viewpoints,” Webb said.

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