

Why Our Criminal Justice System Needs to be Reformed
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The American criminal justice system consists of three main branches: the courts, corrections system, and police. These branches help bring legal rule to society. (*OpenStax, 2015*) However, it is not perfect, actually far from it. In my opinion, there are many problems and corruptions within the criminal justice system, and I am not the only one. Over the past decade, these flaws have been pushed into the light, as more and more people want to fix these issues. Though I have plenty of opinions on this topic, let's first look at some others' thoughts. Open Society-U.S says "Three major findings are: Americans want to attack the underlying causes of crime rather than the symptoms; prevention is the nation's premiere criminal justice goal; harsh prison sentences are being reconsidered as a primary crime-fighting tool, especially for non-violent offenders." (*Open Society- U.S, 2002*) This statement reminds me of our previous discussion topic, and how conflict theorists believe it is more important to find the root of the problem than the ways we deal with it. Logan Gomez at Arizona University says "Currently, the criminal justice system's three largest issues are police retention and recruitment, lack of resource parity between prosecution and public defenders, and its public perception. Currently, police recruitment and retention is arguably the largest problem facing the criminal justice system. According to a 2021 report by the Police Executive Research Forum, the rate of police resignation across police departments of all sizes dramatically increased from 2016 to 2021." (Logan Gomez, 2022) Now this opinion covers how the increasing number of police resign, we lose more protection and enforcement for our society. One of my personal opinions on this is the police that do happen to stay in their profession are not educated enough. Not all, but plenty of police are not morally equipped, or even equipped with the specific skills one needs. We can see this from recent news stories over the past few years, one example being George Floyd and the tragedies that followed. To quickly cover some of my other opinions, I see flaws in the bailing/bond system, overpopulation in jails, the excruciatingly long time period between arrest and trial date, and mandatory sentencing. A controversial opinion I have is the overflow of prisoners in jails, specifically what we deem criminal. I believe those who are in jail for possession of marijuana or the selling of

marijuana are taking up space for harsher, worse criminals. I also strongly believe the time between arrest and trial is absolutely disgusting. Though it depends on who you see innocent and guilty, I believe months, even years of awaiting trial is unacceptable, especially for the people who have been wrongly accused. Overall, I think we need to show more time and interest toward our corrupt judicial system, especially the treatment we show, as well as how we treat ex-convicts. Everyone deserves a second chance, especially ex-convicts who reasonably got a second chance at a normal life. They deserve jobs, families, and normality like the rest of society.

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