Justice Reinvestment Initiative I Reinvestments

Anticipated Savings

- The Council of State Governments (CSG) estimated JRI I would save $260 million, with $86 million reinvested over five years, based on the overall JRI policy framework.
- However, the Department of Corrections (DOC) and Office of the Budget estimated savings of $141.8 million over five years, according the fiscal note attached to the actual JRI legislation (Act 122 and Act 196 of 2012).

Reinvestment

- The formula for reinvestment of savings, generated through a prison population reduction, diversion of mid-minimum and short-minimum offenders, and a more efficient parole system:
  - In 2013-14: 75 percent of prior year savings.
  - In 2014-15: 100 percent of prior year savings.
  - In 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18: 25 percent of prior year savings.
- Transfers to the Justice Reinvestment Fund totaled $13.5 million:
  - In 2013-14: $0
  - In 2014-15: $991,000
  - In 2015-16: $2.95 million
  - In 2016-17: $9.61 million
  - In 2017-18: $0
- An ambitious timeline in which to realize savings, and slow implementation of the changes, led to lack of funds to reinvest in 2013-14.
- The 2017 Fiscal Code cut all JRI funding in 2017-18 to balance the budget, meaning poor policy decisions—not JRI shortcomings—altered direct reinvestments.

Actual Savings and Outcomes

- Since JRI I passage, Pennsylvania has experienced cost aversions, a nearly 4,000 inmate decline, and a prison closure. How much is attributable to JRI I, or to other changes, is debatable.
  - The savings attributable to JRI as estimated by CSG in 2018 was $96 million.
  - According to DOC 2019-20 testimony: “the prison population is 25.8% lower than it would have been without JRI. Our budget is 23.3% lower ($543 M) than it would have been without JRI.” This is based upon 2010 anticipated population growth.
- These trends indicate JRI savings are growing, but not as quickly as predicted.
- This analysis accounts for official savings of certain countable measures. JRI has a broader impact on behavior and policies, such as improved technologies, training, and drug treatment, which are difficult to measure short-term.