Criminal Justice and Drug Offenses in 2020

The Controlled Substance Act at 50 Years Symposium - Lunchtime Plenary
Drug Use in the U.S. is Widely Criminalized
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1 in 5 incarcerated people is locked up for a drug offense

451,000 are incarcerated for nonviolent drug offenses every day.

State prisons
198,000

Local jails
118,000 Unconvicted
35,000 Convicted

Federal
81,000 Bureau of Prisons
16,000 U.S. Marshals

Youth 2,500
Military 90
### International Rates of Incarceration per 100,000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
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<td>Sweden</td>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
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</table>
1 in 8 Americans knows someone who has died from a drug overdose

70,237 Deaths in 2017
DOES CRIMINALIZATION EQUAL SAFETY?
Public Views Are Shifting


PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Source: Marijuana Policy Project
Credit: German Lopez
... Creating an Opportunity for Action

Newly elected prosecutors are playing a unique role in advancing harm reduction interventions
Lessons from Abroad
Moving from Criminalization to Harm Reduction
What is Taking Hold

- Law-enforcement assisted diversion
- Syringe-exchange programs
- Medication-Assisted Treatment
- Naloxone distribution
- Overdose Prevention Sites
Why Prosecutors?

- Prosecutors have significant power and discretion to decline to proceed with charges

- Local-level policies drive the US criminal justice system and are especially important in the face of heightened enforcement at the federal level

- Elected prosecutors have unique credibility on public safety issues and can advocate for reforms