More Than 100 Leading Academics Publish Comprehensive Criminal Justice Reform Report

PHOENIX, Oct. 25, 2017 - In an effort to inform criminal justice reform, the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University published a major new report titled *Reforming Criminal Justice*. The culmination of a yearlong collaboration, the four-volume publication involved 120 of the nation's foremost academics to discuss specific topics within the reform movement. The report was made possible with support from the Charles Koch Foundation.

There is bipartisan agreement that the criminal justice system is broken. For the past decade, policymakers and researchers have begun to successfully correct decades of over-criminalization and mass incarceration. And though many felt federal progress on reform had stalled over the past year, we are now seeing momentum build.

Erik Luna, ASU Law Amelia D. Lewis professor of constitutional and criminal law, directs the project. "The goal of this report is to connect academics with those responsible for criminal justice policy," said Luna. "In recent years, academics have not effectively participated in and contributed to the conversation. This is a way for them not only to be a part of the discussion, but also to impact real-world policy."

The coalition of scholars, known as the Academy for Justice, was inspired by a bipartisan summit in 2015, which brought together prominent figures in the reform movement to discuss the problems of criminal justice and to propose real, meaningful, lasting solutions.

Following the 2015 summit, Professor Luna spearheaded an effort to integrate the expertise of the nation's leading academics into the criminal justice reform movement. That effort ultimately led to the idea of creating an unprecedented report with perspectives from criminal justice experts from colleges and universities such as Berkeley, Chicago, Columbia, Georgetown, Harvard, NYU, Penn, Stanford, Vanderbilt, and Virginia. The scholars gathered at ASU Law's Beus Center for Law and Society in February 2017, to share ideas, review and provide feedback on each other's work, and ensure the highest quality content and issue development.

Although academics have participated in recent reform discussions, they have long been an underutilized resource, called upon to address specific issues only as they arise on a case-by-case basis. Their frequent writings have seldom been widely publicized, typically hidden from public view in law libraries or behind online paywalls.

The project is made possible by a grant from the Charles Koch Foundation, a charitable foundation supporting students and scholars exploring issues related to free and open societies including criminal justice reform.

"The foundation's work is guided by an appreciation for the role scholarship and scientific scrutiny can play in informing and driving progress on critical issues," said John Hardin, director of University Relations at the Charles Koch Foundation. "That's the case when it comes to addressing problems within our criminal justice system. And the foundation believes Professor Luna is uniquely positioned to help fill some of the biggest gaps in knowledge."

The report provides both detailed analysis and specific policy proposals, a resource of unrivaled breadth and depth in the reform movement. The 57 separate contributions cover a wide range of specific topics within criminal justice: from criminalization and policing to adjudication and incarceration.

To maintain and increase its momentum, policymakers, thought leaders, and community members must encourage a broader and deeper understanding of the problems and forge thoughtful solutions to these difficult issues. This is where academics have an important role to play.

The report is being distributed to policymakers, criminal justice officials, think tanks, non-profit organizations, and community activists, but will also be freely available to the public through a dedicated website, academyforjustice.org.

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