

Colorado Balance in Public Safety and Justice Initiative

Be it Enacted by the People of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.

The people of Colorado find and declare that public safety is best protected when violent crime is reduced and liberty is preserved. Colorado has experienced a decline in prison populations since 2012 while violent crime has increased. It is the intent of the people to create a balanced approach that stabilizes violent crime at lower levels without returning to mass incarceration. This act shall be known as the Balance in Public Safety and Justice Act.

SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, add part 34 to article 17 as follows:

ARTICLE 34

Balance in Public Safety and Justice

17-34-101. Purpose.

The purpose of this article is to reduce violent crime through targeted prevention, effective community supervision, and support for victims, while maintaining low incarceration rates.

17-34-102. Definitions.

(1) "Community-based violence intervention program" means a nonprofit or local program that engages in outreach, mediation, mentorship, or counseling to prevent violent acts.

(2) "Technical violation" means a failure to comply with a condition of probation or parole that does not involve a new criminal offense.

(3) "Restitution" means payment or service by an offender to a victim of crime as ordered by the court.

17-34-103. Community-based violence intervention grants.

(1) The division of criminal justice shall administer a grant program to fund community-based violence intervention programs.

(2) Grants shall be awarded annually to nonprofit organizations, local governments, or faith-based groups demonstrating the capacity to reduce violent crime through outreach and prevention.

(3) Priority shall be given to communities with violent crime rates higher than the state average.

17-34-104. Probation and parole reform.

(1) No individual shall be returned to prison solely for a technical violation of probation or parole.

(2) The department of corrections and the judicial department shall adopt a system of graduated sanctions and earned compliance credits to encourage successful completion of supervision.

(3) Compliance credits shall reduce the length of supervision for each month of full compliance.

17-34-105. Reentry support.

(1) The department of corrections shall ensure that every person released from prison has a reentry plan including housing, employment assistance, and access to identification documents.

(2) A reentry support fund is created to provide temporary financial assistance for housing, transportation, or employment needs of persons released from prison.

17-34-106. Victim restitution.

(1) Courts shall prioritize restitution and community service as sentencing options in cases involving non-homicide offenses.

(2) A restitution enforcement unit is created within the judicial department to assist victims in collecting restitution.

(3) Funds collected through restitution enforcement shall be disbursed to victims within thirty days of collection.

17-34-107. Transparency and reporting.

(1) The division of criminal justice shall publish an online dashboard updated quarterly with data on violent crime, prison population, probation and parole outcomes, and restitution collection.

(2) The department of corrections and judicial department shall report annually on compliance with this article.

17-34-108. Funding.

(1) The General Assembly may annually appropriate funds to implement this article, subject to the state fiscal year spending limits imposed by section 20 of article X of the Colorado constitution.

(2) At least fifty percent of any appropriated savings identified from a reduction in the state prison population, as determined by the General Assembly, shall be deposited into the reentry support fund and the community-based violence intervention grant program, subject to the limits of section 20 of article X of the Colorado constitution.

17-34-109. Sunset review.

This article is repealed, effective July 1, 2036, unless reauthorized by the General Assembly after review by the Colorado commission on criminal and juvenile justice.

SECTION 3. Effective date.

This act takes effect January 1, 2027, and applies to offenses, supervision, and restitution orders on or after that date.