



District Attorney: Model Profile

A model District Attorney will possess the following attributes in their capacity:

- Favors policies that are tough on violent and serious offenders, while being equally aware of the root causes of those crimes.
- Supports or creates programs to assist in the reentry transition for formerly incarcerated individuals. These programs require individuals to complete a personal responsibility program as part of their reentry process. These programs include: job training, parental training courses, guidance for individuals entering college or completing GED, etc.). Model: Back on Track in San Francisco, California:
<http://www.sfdistrictattorney.org/page.asp?id=49>.
- Addresses the reentry process of the female prison population – the fastest growing prison and jail population in the U.S. These programs should address the problems faced by female offenders and provide support in their reentry process including: parental training and support, job training, securing housing, and educational opportunities. For women with children, a residential program would be ideal. Model: Girls Re-entry Assistance Support Project (GRASP) in Brooklyn, New York:
<http://www.brooklynnda.org/grasp/grasp.htm>.
- Supports initiatives that seek to expose instances where individuals have been wrongfully convicted. For example, District Attorney Craig Watkins of Dallas, Texas instituted a conviction integrity unit designed to work towards the release of prisoners, through DNA evidence, who were wrongly-convicted¹.
- Supports and creates programs that focus on the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders, and addresses the root cases of their actions in an effort to prevent a cycle of crime. These programs should also put young offenders on track to return to school and continue their education. Model: Probation Services providing by the Dallas County Juvenile Department:
<http://www.dallascounty.org/department/juvenile/probation/probationhome.html>.

¹ www.ci.austin.tx.us/opm/downloads/final_conference_news_release.doc

- Promotes and established pre-booking diversions that identify low-level drug offenders upon arrest and place them in a community based treatment and or support service program instead of prosecuting them and sending them to jail or prison. This program will help address the root causes of the crime as opposed to warehousing people in jail or prison for having an addiction. King County(Seattle) Public Defenders Program is currently modeling LEAD in partnership with the Harborview Crisis Triage Center.
- Seeks rehabilitation of drug offenders, including creating programs if none exist. Programs should target drug-addicted defendants who have been previously convicted of at least once for non-violent felonies. These programs provide a residential therapeutic community (TC) drug treatment program for 1 to 2 years. Individuals who complete this treatment program would have charges against them dropped. Individuals who do not complete the program will be sentenced to prison. Programs should include a job counselor to assist in the finding of employment upon completion of the program. Model: Drug Treatment Alternative-to-Prison (DTAP) in Brooklyn, New York: <http://www.brooklynda.org/dtap/dtap.htm>.
- Condemns the death penalty as part of a flawed system that does not address the root causes of the crimes committed. Instead, District Attorneys should explore other more appropriate punishment for offenders of serious and violent crimes. Although life sentences are a viable alternative to the death penalty, life sentence without parole should be seen as a severe sentence tantamount to the death penalty.
- Believes that juvenile offenders should be charged and sentenced as juveniles for their crimes, preventing our youth from being sentenced to a lifetime of punishment among adult inmates with decreased chance of redemption for acts committed during their youth. Such decisions should be made in the best interest of the victim, the community, and the defendant. For example, Jason Pratt's case in Atlanta, Georgia was transferred back to juvenile court, from adult charges, given his age at the time the crime was committed².
- Addresses the racial disparities within our federal and state criminal justice systems, by actively seeking alternatives to the rigid structures that keep these disparities thriving. For example, the crack cocaine versus powdered cocaine discrepancy disproportionately sentences low-level offenses, largely from communities of color, to harsher punishments

² <http://clatl.com/freshloaf/archives/2010/06/29/paul-howard-transfers-jason-pratts-case-to-juvenile-court>

than their counterparts outside of those communities. Programs like DTAP in Brooklyn, New York give these offenders an opportunity seek treatment while undergoing punishment for their actions³.

- Demands the accountability of our law enforcement officials as protectors of all segments of our communities. This may include developing model policies and standards for use of force, racial profiling, and other policing issues as well as holding law enforcement officers accountable if they violate such policies. These policies must also include best practices and standards for interrogation procedures, additional information on this can be found at: <http://www.innocenceproject.org/fix/False-Confessions.php>.

³ http://judiciary.senate.gov/hearings/testimony.cfm?id=267&wit_id=578