

State Issue 1: Overburdens Local Governments

Claim

Proponents of State Issue 1 claim that the amendment will yield at least \$100 million in annual budget savings that will be reinvested in treatment.

The Facts

State Issue 1 is an unfunded mandate that shifts the costs for drug treatment from the State to local government. The projected savings are speculative at best. It is not clear that they will be anything other than a one-time savings. Local governments and tax payers will foot the bill for the costs of treatment, probation, and for local jails that already have their own budget issues. It makes the State's budget look good, but increased costs to counties are ignored.

1) California's Proposition 47 (2014).

- Proposition 47 reduced some drug crimes to misdemeanors, allowed convicted offenders to apply for sentence reductions, and promised to reinvest savings from a reduced prison population into treatment.
- The independent Legislative Analyst's Office estimated that Proposition 47 would result in savings in the low hundreds of millions of dollars annually.
- The State awarded the first grants last June, three years after the passage of Prop 47.
- Grants totaled \$103 million over three years.¹ A fraction of what was projected.

2) Oklahoma's State Question 780 and State Question 781 (2016).

- State Questions 780 and 781 reclassified some offenses, such as simple drug possession and property crimes, as misdemeanors and required that the savings be invested through an appropriation to counties for rehabilitation programs.
- In July of this year, the Oklahoma Office of Management and Enterprise Services released a report stating that the changes led to more than \$63 million in savings in fiscal year 2018.
- The Director of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections has disputed this, stating that "criminal justice reform must be firmly supported by the facts" and that the "report that was issued is not supported by the facts and drastically overstates the averted costs."²

3) The closure of Ohio's state hospitals foretells problems.³

- When Ohio closed its state hospitals for the mentally ill the closure came with the promise of diverting savings to community treatment.
- While the goal was laudable, the promise of local money never materialized.
- The closure created a crisis for the mentally ill. There was no safety net.
- There was no way to ensure that the mentally ill received necessary medication and rehabilitation.
- A substantial number of mentally ill individuals wound up homeless, jailed, or in prison.

¹ <http://www.bscc.ca.gov/news.php?id=125>

² https://www.tulsaworld.com/homepagelatest/prison-chief-says-criminal-justice-reform-report-is-not-supported/article_03795734-687a-57ca-85a8-aae635a62692.html

³ <https://www.daytondailynews.com/news/years-later-closing-mental-health-hospital-haunts-this-region/QUPD7CO2uUlbJbxAlcvuRM/>