



## **MI-CEMI's Position on Policy Carveouts**

We are a collaborative of Michigan-based organizations committed to inclusivity within criminal legal reform. The majority of individuals in Michigan's correctional facilities will eventually rejoin their communities, underscoring the significance of their return in relation to public safety, preserving human dignity, and upholding human rights. Confining reform solely to those with low-level, non-violent charges proves counterproductive and frequently results in individuals who have completed sentences for more serious offenses returning to their communities without the requisite tools or support for a successful reintegration.

Conventional stakeholders within the criminal legal system, including prosecutors, sheriffs, judges, police associations, and other law enforcement entities, share our commitment to safeguarding public safety. However, they frequently advocate for overly stringent policies, leading to the dilution of reform legislation based on anecdotal evidence and political considerations, rather than relying on existing public policy research.

Within the realm of criminal legal reform, numerous evidence-based and comprehensive initiatives have faced adversity from entrenched interest groups still clinging to the antiquated tough-on-crime rhetoric of yesteryears. The practice of creating carve-outs in crime categories to placate stakeholders has become a prevalent negotiating strategy in recent national criminal legal endeavors. Fortunately, diverse coalitions spanning the political spectrum have emerged, earnestly addressing a broad spectrum of reform issues, including systemic racism, inequality, and human rights violations.

As a unified coalition fiercely committed to addressing the factors underlying mass incarceration and ongoing state control and surveillance post-incarceration, we vow to collectively confront the practice of carving out crime categories in policy, procedure, and practice negotiations. Our member organizations will vigorously challenge this practice in various forums, driven by our commitment to inclusivity.

We acknowledge that avoiding challenging cases will hinder our comprehensive efforts to tackle mass incarceration effectively. We grasp the intricate social dynamics linked to violent offenses such as murder, assault with intent to commit murder, and sexual violence within our communities. We firmly reject the idea of a justice system based on retribution. Instead, our mission centers on the principles of redemption, transformation, and accountability. We not only believe in the potential for individuals to change but actively promote these values at the core of our endeavor to end mass incarceration.



We are dedicated to actively seeking the often underestimated insights of individuals who have experienced incarceration or state supervision when collaborating with policymakers in crafting policies, procedures, and practices. In this endeavor, we cast a wide net and firmly decline to automatically endorse policies, procedures, or practices that exclude certain groups of people based solely on the nature of their offenses for the sake of convenience.

At the very least, as a collaborative, we will require stakeholders to provide evidence-based impact assessments for all proposed carve-outs moving forward. We also acknowledge that carve-outs have influenced and molded existing laws. Our commitment extends to ensuring the principles outlined in this document are retroactively applied to legislation that has previously excluded certain individuals.