



New Illinois Law Abolishes Cash Bail, Punishes Law Enforcement

Claiming that he and the state legislature are moving to dismantle the “systemic racism” that allegedly plagues the criminal-justice system, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker (D) on Monday signed HB 3653, a criminal-justice reform law that will, among other things, abolish the system of cash bail in Illinois.

Critics of the new law believe that it punishes law enforcement unnecessarily and makes the public less safe, all to appease the Marxist organization Black Lives Matter.

The changes in the cash-bail system will not take effect until 2023, reportedly to allow judges time to develop new procedures to set conditions of release.

Besides ending the cash-bail system, the sweeping new law will require all officers to be equipped with body cams by 2025. Further, it will divert people convicted of low-level drug crimes into substance-abuse programs; set statewide standards on use of force, crowd control tactics, and arrest techniques; remove the sworn affidavit requirement when filing police misconduct complaints; eliminate license suspensions for unpaid fines and fees due to red-light camera and traffic offenses; and end prison gerrymandering.

According to Pritzker, the new law is long overdue and a way for the state to address “systemic racism” in Illinois, which the governor called a “pandemic.”

“This legislation marks a substantial step toward dismantling the systemic racism that plagues our communities, our state and our nation and brings us closer to true safety, true fairness and true justice,” said Pritzker in a [statement](#). “In this terrible year, in the middle of a brutal viral pandemic that hurt Black people and Brown people disproportionately, lawmakers fought to address the pandemic of systemic racism in the wake of the national protests.”

Also hailing the passing of the new law was Cook County State’s Attorney Kim Foxx. Foxx, you may remember, was the state official who dropped all the charges against hate-crime hoaxer Jussie Smollett.

“For those who engage in the fear-mongering rhetoric, for those who wish to hold on to a system that hasn’t made us safer, for those who wish to ignore the historic and systemic issues of racism in our institutions at the cost of lives, particularly Black and Brown lives, I say to you that this legislation is just the starting point for the continued work that we must do collectively, collaboratively to ensure that all of our communities are safe and just.”

Pritzker credited the Illinois Black Caucus and other activists for driving the legislation through the process: “Today we advance our values in the law — progress secured despite the pandemic, because of



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Written by [James Murphy](#) on February 24, 2021

the passion and push of the Legislative Black Caucus, activists, and residents intent on leaving a better Illinois for all our children.”

One group Pritzker chose not to give credit to were the people of law enforcement, who will be most directly affected by the legislation. The Illinois Law Enforcement Coalition put it bluntly: “This new law is a blatant move to punish an entire, honorable profession that will end up hurting law abiding citizens the most,” said a [statement](#) from the group.

Pritzker and the legislature also ignored Illinois citizens, 160,000 of whom signed a [petition](#) asking Pritzker to veto the bill.

The Illinois Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and the officers it represents came out strongly against the bill prior to its signing. A survey of its officers shows that 97 percent of the 1,500 respondents say that they feel “physically or financially threatened” by the provisions in the bill, while 99 percent of respondents believe that the legislation will embolden criminals.

“The survey results are no surprise because it’s clear to anyone who reads this bill that law enforcement was not involved in drawing up its provisions,” said Illinois FOP State Lodge President Chris Southwood, who commented before the governor signed the bill. “Illinois will be a much more inviting atmosphere for criminals and a much more dangerous place for law-abiding citizens if this bill becomes law.”

The survey also showed that 83 percent of respondents believe that law enforcement’s ability to respond to crimes will be adversely affected by the new law. Sixty-six percent of respondents are considering early retirement as a result of the legislation’s passing, and 46 percent say that they are now actively looking for employment in different states.

“The legislation prevents officers from taking immediate, potentially life-saving action in critical situations,” Southwood said. “Its no cash bail provision makes it difficult to keep people locked up who may be a further threat to victims, and it places numerous mandates on police agencies with no funding source for local communities.”



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