



## INDIANA PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS COUNCIL

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### **Prosecutor Spells Out Concerns to Legislative Commission Following Criminal Code Reform**

INDIANAPOLIS (September 6, 2017) - Vanderburgh County Prosecutor Nicholas Hermann, representing the Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council, updated the Courts and Criminal Code Interim Study Commission on the impact of the criminal code reform at the Indiana Statehouse Wednesday morning.

While prosecutors across the state of Indiana are seeing sharp increases in felony charges compared to 2010\*, Prosecutor Hermann described the need for harsher penalties, more treatment services for those in the grips of addiction, and more funding sources for overcrowded jails across Indiana.

"When we talk about the difference between a prison and a jail, I think that's a distinction, that's getting blurred right now," Hermann explained when describing the overcrowded conditions at a number of correctional facilities across Indiana.

"A prison is somewhere people are supposed to go when they are serving a sentence. A prison is a place where people are supposed to go that are convicted of a crime. A jail is a pre-trial detention facility. That is for people who are awaiting trial, who are a threat to society."

Hermann described to the committee that the job of a prosecutor is to prevent crime, while simultaneously getting help for the people who can turn their lives around. But reduction of penalties for crimes across the board, provide less incentives for those arrested to take advantage of drug treatment and mental health programs.

"The public shouldn't have to live in fear. The public should know that people committing crimes, will go behind bars. People shouldn't have to fear for the safety of their families," explained Hermann.

He discussed a number of disturbing trends in Indiana: "Crime rates are up, CHINS – Children in Need of Services - cases are up, overdose deaths are up, child fatalities are up, prisons are full, jails are full, recidivism is up and we live in a state where you're more likely to die of a drug overdose than a motor vehicle accident."

\*Information provided by Indiana Trial Court Statistics

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