



CRC LEGISLATIVE ACT — SCFA

The "Set the Captives Free!" Act



A compassionate work release program based on Iowa values:

- ★ Giving inmates a second chance
- ★ Reducing sentences through meaningful work
- ★ Supervised rehabilitation with on-site mental health care
- ★ Lowering taxes while improving Iowa's infrastructure

The “Set the Captives Free!” Act

Projected to Save Iowa Taxpayers \$18–\$21 M Annually

Iowa Currently Spends:

- \$37,000–\$42,000 per inmate every year¹
- Hundreds of millions annually on incarceration²
- Additional taxpayer costs through:
 - overcrowded jails,
 - court systems,
 - law enforcement,
 - and expanding prison infrastructure

Turning Prison Costs Into Public Benefit

The CRC Work Release Program allows eligible inmates to:

- work on supervised CRC infrastructure projects,
- assist with disaster recovery and cleanup,
- repair and restore Iowa communities,
- and earn reduced sentences through verified labor and rehabilitation.

The goal is simple:

Restore lives. Rebuild Iowa. Reduce taxpayer costs.

Public Safety Comes First

Eligibility would require:

- good behavior,
- low security risk,

¹ Iowa Office of Auditor of State, *Report on the Iowa Department of Corrections Institutional Costs* (Des Moines, IA: State of Iowa, 2024).

² Iowa Department of Corrections, *FY 2025 Annual Report* (Des Moines, IA: Iowa Department of Corrections, 2025).

- rehabilitation participation,
- supervision and oversight,
- judicial review,
- and victim protections.

Violent or repeat offenders could be excluded except under special review procedures.

Estimated Taxpayer Savings

If Iowa reduced incarceration by just **500 inmates annually**, projected savings could reach:

\$18–\$21 Million Per Year³

Additional long-term savings may include:

- lower recidivism,
- delayed prison expansion,
- reduced overcrowding,
- increased employment after release,
- and reduced strain on Iowa courts and counties.

Built on Iowa Values

Restoration Instead of Idleness

Giving inmates a second chance to contribute to society.

Compassion with Accountability

Sentence reductions earned through real work and rehabilitation.

Fiscal Responsibility

Reducing correctional costs while improving Iowa infrastructure.

CRC Safeguards

The program would include:

- voluntary participation,
- mental health support,

³ Based on estimated incarceration costs multiplied by a hypothetical reduction of 500 inmates annually.

- vocational training,
- educational opportunities,
- independent oversight,
- and structured reentry pathways after release.

Research shows rehabilitation and work programs reduce repeat offenses and improve long-term reintegration outcomes.⁴

Where These Costs Come From

Current incarceration costs are funded primarily through:

- Iowa income taxes,
- state sales taxes,
- and state general fund appropriations.

County jail overcrowding and court burdens also place indirect pressure on local property taxes.

⁴ Council of State Governments Justice Center, *50 States, 1 Goal: Examining State-Level Recidivism Trends in an Era of Criminal Justice Reform* (2024).