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- The system is particularly hard on the poor: they have a harder time paying bail; they depend on public defenders' offices that are underfunded; they are more likely to lose jobs, places to live, and families while awaiting trial. They cannot afford to pay for alternatives to incarceration.
- Pennsylvania is the only state that does not support public defenders' offices; these are all funded by the counties resulting in great disparity from one judicial district to another. Different districts have different policies about who is eligible for public defenders.
- Counties have different policies, services, procedures, and costs in local jails.
- The cost of incarcerating an individual in a state prison is approximately \$42,000 per year.
- Alternatives to incarceration not only cost less but often result in less recidivism.
- Prisoners are paid from \$.19 to \$.42 an hour for work.
- State prisons are not privatized; however many services and some county jails are contracted with private firms.
- Obstacles for those re-entering society after a prison stay are overwhelming, often resulting in recidivism.

New position in brief:

LWVPA believes that our justice system should be fair to all and that everyone who becomes a part of the system should be treated with dignity. The system should be effective, cost efficient, and data driven. Persons should not be deprived of constitutional rights to reasonable bail or effective counsel because they are poor, because they live in a poor community or because it is politically or economically expedient. Barriers to successful reintegration into society, including damaging conditions in jails and prison, restrictions and requirements of reentrants, and legal financial obligations that realistically cannot be paid, should be minimized.