“It is a great experience for gaining knowledge on important topics and having an opportunity to make your voice heard.”
Participant, Tucson Future Leaders Town Hall
KEY POINTS FROM FUTURE LEADERS TOWN HALL ON “CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN ARIZONA”

GOALS OF ARIZONA’S CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM
- Ensure fairness and justice for all including criminals, victims, and the community.
- Make punishment equitable and specific to the offense.
- Focus on rehabilitation during incarceration.
- Have consequences and accountability for those who commit crimes.
- Provide for the safety of the community.
- Offer programs and services after release that reduce recidivism.
- Consider the return on investment of dollars spent on incarceration vs. rehabilitation vs. crime prevention.
- Create safe environments for learning, work, worship and public gathering.

WAYS TO IMPROVE OUR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM
- Create more therapy and rehabilitation programs for substance abusers and people with mental illnesses.
- Give judges more discretion to allow them to make case-specific decisions on sentencing.
- Train police officers on how to focus more on the preservation of peace and better interact with people who have mental health and communication issues.
- Expand diversion programs like drug, mental health and homeless courts that keep people out of prison and rehabilitate them to become productive members of society.
- Reduce the stigma of being a criminal through programs like the pen pal system, community service projects and work-release opportunities.
- Reform the bail system to reflect the severity of the offense and provide alternatives for those who lack financial resources.
- Focus on crime prevention by cleaning up neighborhoods, making social services more accessible, and improving job training and educational opportunities.
- Provide education and counseling to families and students to reduce interaction with the criminal justice system.

“This program has enlightened me. I feel I can express my ideas and use my voice. I have learned a lot. “
Participant, Tucson Future Leaders Town Hall

“I felt heard for the first time and it felt good.”
Participant, City of Phoenix Future Leaders Town Hall
MESSAGES FOR ARIZONA’S ELECTED LEADERS

• Strengthen our education system to recognize and address problems to prevent young people from becoming involved with the criminal justice system.
• Increase funding for organizations delivering re-entry programs and services.
• Provide incentives to businesses to hire those with a criminal record.
• Make laws based on what is best to create safe communities and productive citizens vs. a mindset of being “tough on crime.”
• Provide sufficient funding to public defenders and their offices to ensure adequate legal representation for those who cannot afford an attorney.
• Revisit why and how we use private prisons and contractors.
• Consider legislation that looks at changes needed in sentencing guidelines, parole, fees, crime prevention and rights after release.
• Shift resources to focus on building healthy communities and improving trust in the criminal justice system.

INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENTS TO ACTION

• Contact elected officials to advocate for the issues and ideas we discussed at the Town Hall.
• Get more involved in programs that stop the school to prison pipeline.
• Talk to our peers about the specific issues facing the criminal justice system and the stereotypes of those caught up in it.
• Present our colleagues with statistics and factual evidence that they can share with those in their networks.
• Register to vote and educate myself on the current state of our criminal justice system.
• Support elected officials and other leaders who advocate for fairness for criminals, victims and their family members.
• Learn about available services to help point others to better their situation and avoid a criminal path.
• Seek educational opportunities to better understand the criminal justice system such as internships, explorer programs and interactions with those who work in the system.

Participants at the Yavapai College - Prescott Campus Future Leaders Town Hall