CRIMELINES
THE 20 YEAR STORY OF CRIME & INCARCERATION
Crime rates in Pennsylvania have consistently dropped over the past twenty years, by 45 percent. Further, crime rates in Pennsylvania have remained consistently lower than the national crime rates. These crime drops have happened within the context of a variety of events over the past twenty years in the Pennsylvania criminal justice system. Crime dropped under different administrations, under the openings and closings of prison facilities, after the passage of various criminal justice legislative reforms, and in the absence of many mandatory minimum sentencing laws. Crime also dropped during the same six year period (2012-2018) that the prison population dropped in Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania prison population dropped by 4,387 inmates from its peak in June 2012, while at the same time crime dropped 29 percent. Crime also dropped for a variety individual crime types, including violent crimes and property crimes. Murder and rape are two exceptions. The murder rate and rape rate have increased in recent years in Pennsylvania, although in the case of rape this reflects a change in the definition of reporting for rape and also mirrors a large national increase in rape. The bottom line is that Pennsylvanians are overall significantly safer today than they were twenty years ago.

SOURCE: The data in this report come from two sources. The crime data comes from the F.B.I.’s Uniform Crime Report (UCR). The prison population data comes from the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PA DOC). Crime and incarceration rates per capita are produced by using U.S. Census Bureau estimates of the Pennsylvania population.