## ****Current Administration’s Policies Relating To Crime****

President Obama’s administration has employed initial measures to enforce a shift from long term crime mentality. The administration has already passed legislating sparing minor drug offenders from serving a mandatory minimum sentence that led to imprisonment of many Americans in the past.

Additionally, the administration started a top bottom review of the present sentencing policies in the country and even committed to review present guidelines calling for long term imprisonment of those convicted of crimes related to child pornography. The significant change of criminal fairness policy reflects on the efforts of the administration to help ease congestion issue in US prisons. Some of the crime policies include the Fair Sentencing Act that the US president passed in 2010.

The policy reformed the US justice environment significantly as it reduced the 100:1 differences that existed in sentencing for crack and powder cocaine that had affected many minors (The White House, 2013). The Obama administration is additionally committed to the implementation of the Second Chance Act, offering the common sense resources as evidenced in reduced crimes. In specific, the act supports programs that help to coordinate reentry programs as well as services at the state and local levels. This includes essential programs and services that help to reduce coordination and to enhance transition from imprisonment to community’s integration.

In 2010, the US Department of Justice also contributed to $100 million as funding of up to 178 local and state reentry programs. The department also advised attorney generals across the US to evaluate the legal collateral effects of their state laws being placed on ex-offenders that may be quite difficult to reintegrate into the society.

Local and state governments have also in this relevance taken action, for instance during the legislative sessions in 2011, a good number of states addressed sentencing and correctional issues. Lastly, the current administration is working continuously with local public housing authorities to help them understand local laws relating to the discretion that housing officials hold to help ex-offenders access to public housing.

Enabling ex-offenders to rejoin their families is additionally a focal component in reforming the criminal justice system in the US.

#### ****Comparison Of The Obama Administration With The Previous Administrations****

The Obama administration unlike the past governments deals with complex crimes, specifically cyber threats and terrorism. Starting from the time of Bush, rapid technological measures have offered new avenues for the white collar crimes as well as terrorism and new weapons for crime commissions (Spelman, 2000). Even though past American presidents including Reagan and Clinton strongly fought against terrorism via isolated missile and bomb attacks, there were mainly temporary and limited in scope. Therefore, none-led to the arrest of the combatants.

Contrastingly the Bush and Obama administrations have arrested and held activists and militants of Al Qaeda without criminal charges. The two administrations have also utilized their air drones to kill targeted Al Qaeda operatives. Such measures differentiate the two administrations from the past ones when it comes to fighting terrorism.

The Obama administration in terms of gun prosecutions has registered a few cases compared to the Clinton and Bush administrations (The White House, 2013). Crime control measures in the past administrations were also much stiffer compared to the present administration.

#### ****How Politics Of Crime Changed Over The Past Forty Years****

From the 1960s, crime has been a major issue in the politics of the US. At the beginning, the issue was seen primarily as a matter relating to local politics only. However, things have changed in the recent past with the issue growing to a very focal part in national politics. Barry Goldwater, the 1964 presidential candidate was the first politician to highlight crime threat for US citizens in his campaigns (Gest, 2001).

Despite the fact that he lost in the elections, his rhetoric made an impact on President Lyndon Johnson who up the Commission for the President. The Commission made suggestions for ideal reforms mainly of which the Congress rejected. The later however created a new agency by the name Law Enforcement Assistance Administration that offered significant level of help to the state and local agencies in their efforts to fight crime. In 1980, the agency was abolished (Gest, 2001).

In the 80s, a get tough attitude towards crime dominated President Reagan’s government. Sentencing rules at the federal level in many states were employed with the purpose of ensuring fairness in the criminal justice system. Even so, its implementation led to long term prison sentences. The move to federalize criminal prosecutions was also politically driven and did not have a major effect on street crime, which was the major issue at the time.

According to Gest (2001), the Congress had the habit of first passing laws before getting facts. While the move did less in combating crime, they had major consequences on expenditure and diverted resources of the criminal justice system to areas that attracted major political considerations.

Politicians in the 1990s passed a mandatory life sentences for people convicted of felony for the third time (“Three Strikes and You’re Out” legislation). This was one of the most stringent measures of the time and when Clinton rose to power in 1994, the designed one of the most expensive anticrime acts with up to $30 billion allocated to anti-crime programs. More prisons were built and more law enforcers were employed.

From the year 2001, politicians in Washington also employed smarter strategies of fighting crime, with funds directed to programs that had a major effect on crime reduction. This included prevention and reforming of the criminal justice system as well as drug treatment (Gest, 2001).

#### ****Top Priority Of Current Administration****

The top priority in my opinion for the current Obama Administration should be sentencing and prison reform. The US incarcerates many of its citizens compared to any other state across the globe. In the past forty years, the prison population has increased from 200,000 to 2.3 million, a fact that has led to overcrowding in prisons thus, overwhelming state budget.

This also represents direct effect of policies that deter reintegration into the community through enforcement of restrictions on matters such as access to public housing, child adoption, voting and reception of federal support for education and food in many of the US states.

For example, Alabama has up to 14, 000 inmates but holds 28,000 at present (Equal Justice Initiative 2013).  The state as a result is struggling with overcrowding crisis based on the fact that a large number of people have been sent to prison in the past two and half decades. The costs of maintaining inmates are equally high.

It costs the state of Alabama $26 a day to cater for medical care of a single inmate and national average stands at $ 62 (Equal Initiative, 2013). The numbers highlight the dire need for reforms in sentencing and imprisonment policies in the United States.

### References

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