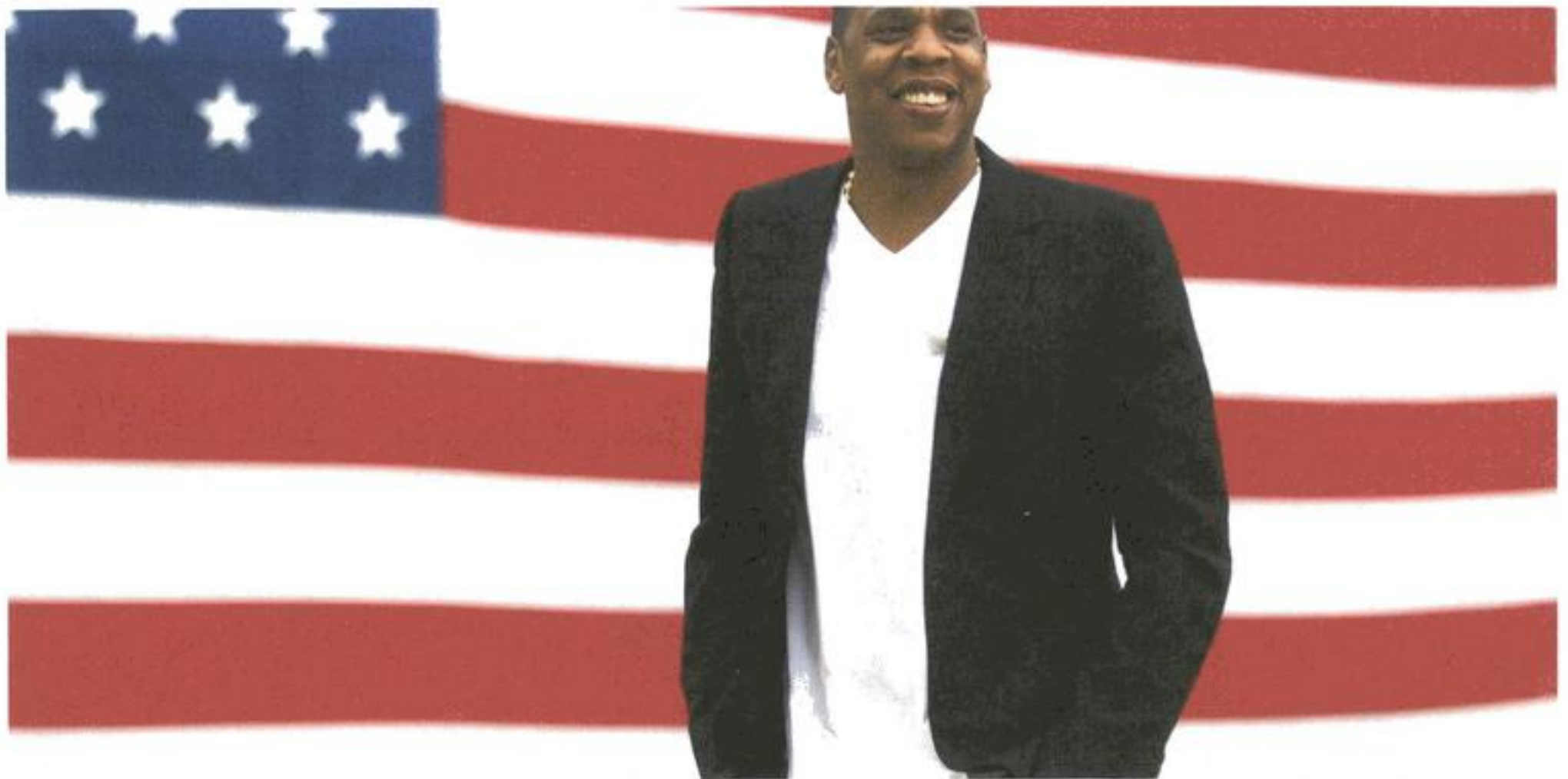




TOP STORY

Jay-Z, Meek Mill call for Miss. to override governor's veto of prison reform bill



FILE - In this May 14, 2012 file photo, entertainer Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter smiles in between interviews, after a news conference at Philadelphia Museum of Art in Philadelphia. Jay-Z's annual festival in Philadelphia, Made in America, won't take place Labor Day weekend due to the coronavirus pandemic. In a statement Wednesday, July 1, 2020, the rap mogul's Roc Nation company said they plan to produce the popular festival in 2021. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke, file) (Source: Matt Rourke)

By [Jacob Gallant](#) | July 16, 2020 at 9:47 AM CDT - Updated July 16 at 10:07 AM

JACKSON, Miss. (WLBT) - A group backed by musicians Jay-Z, Meek Mill and others is calling for Mississippi legislators to override a bill on criminal justice reform that Governor Tate Reeves vetoed.

Senate Bill 2123 was passed by the Senate and House but was shut down by Reeves, who argues the bill was "well-intentioned, but too far." He also pointed out that two-thirds of Republicans in the Senate voted against the bill.

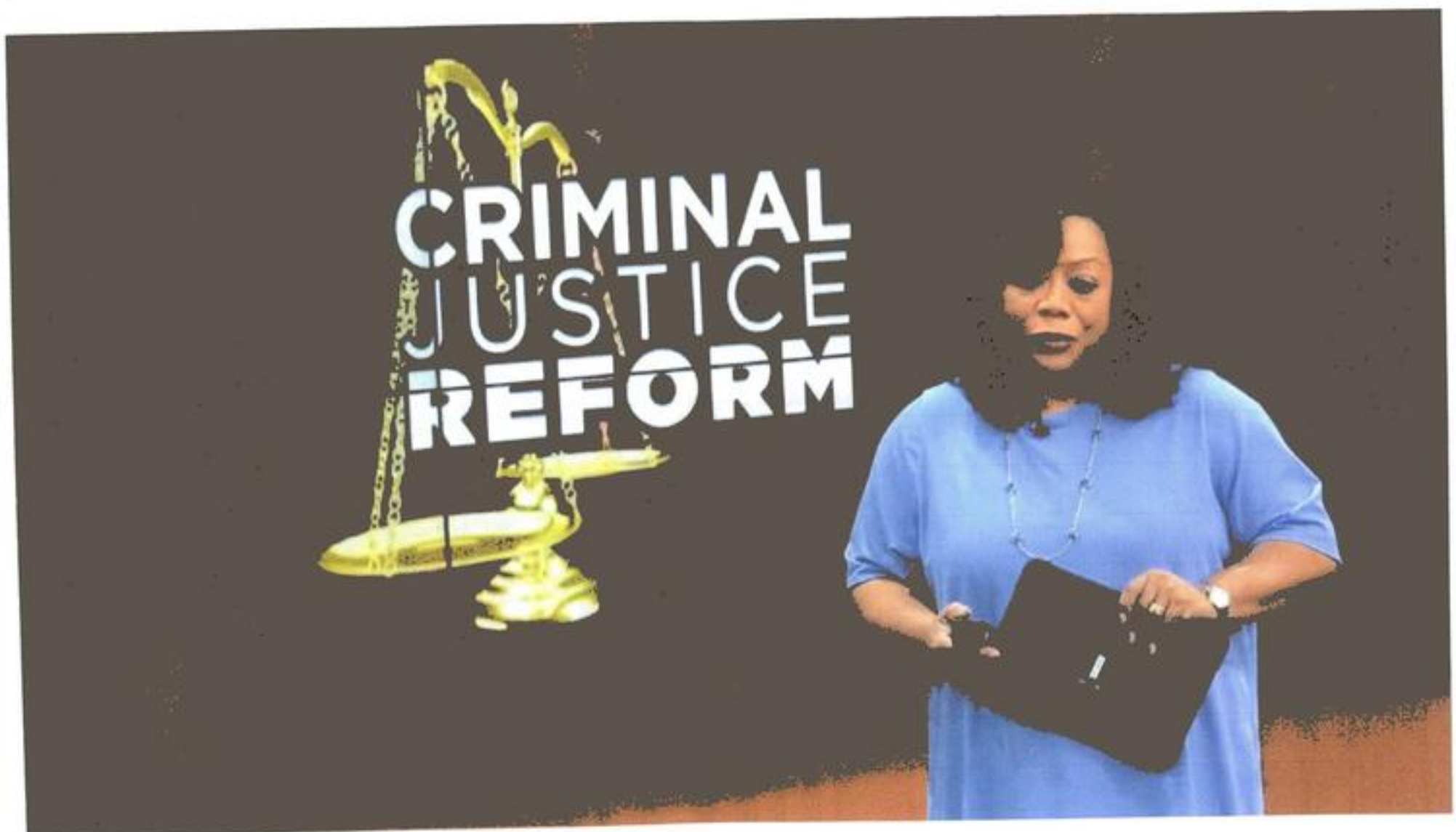
The REFORM Alliance, the organization founded by Jay-Z, Meek Mill, and others, says the veto should be overruled because it would allow 2,000 incarcerated people to become eligible for parole.

The bill would have:

- Allowed people convicted of nonviolent offenses to be eligible for parole at 25% of sentence served
- Allowed those convicted of violent offenses to be eligible for parole after completing 50% of their sentence, or after 20-30 years

REFORM Alliance says the bill could reduce prison overcrowding during the COVID-19 crisis and save taxpayers more than \$45 million.

Jay-Z, alongside rapper Yo Gotti, has been critical of the Mississippi prison system in the past. In February, the pair filed a lawsuit on behalf of inmates at Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman, citing poor conditions at the prison that results in the deaths of inmates at the prison.



After bills vetoed, questions loom regarding future prison reform in Mississippi

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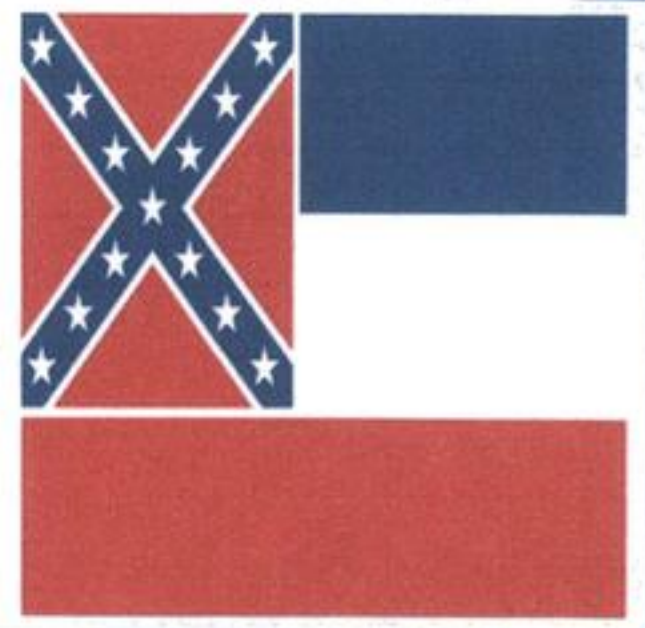


NEWS

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- Robyn Tannehill, mayor of Oxford
- Dr. Mary Graham, president of MGCCC
- T.J. Taylor, Speaker Gunn's policy director



After bills vetoed, questions loom regarding future prison reform in Mississippi

By [David Kenney](#) | July 15, 2020 at 8:34 PM CDT - Updated July 15 at 8:34 PM

JACKSON, Miss. (WLBT) - Last week, Governor Tate Reeves vetoed two prison reform bills. The bills promised to free up space in prisons by letting some offenders out early.

Some say that would have opened resources and funding for programs for rehabilitation of inmates.

Rankin County Sheriff Bryan Bailey has been outspoken against the proposed prison reform bills. He says they could have put dangerous criminals back into Mississippi communities.

He wants the state to put more money into rehabilitation programs in prison, to give offenders a second chance.

Sheriff Bryan Bailey said, “They siphon money from HB 585. Millions and millions of dollars from MDOC that should’ve been reinvested. They took it and put it to other parts of the state budget. They steadily cut MDOC’s budget. Now, if people would open their eyes, checked the fax, they were approximately 50% short on employees.”

The bills would have allowed non-violent offenders to be eligible for parole after serving just 25% of their sentence. Violent offenders would have been eligible for parole after 50% of their sentence was served, or after 20 years, whichever is less.

Two-thousand inmates would have been eligible for release.

J. Robertson of Empower Mississippi said, “What this bill would’ve done is freed up some of those resources and allowed them to be reinvested into programming that actually works, but a state like Mississippi simply can’t afford to maintain the second highest prison population in the country.”

Sheriff Bailey says he started a trustee program years ago and has dozens of success stories. He feels if the state cuts too many felons loose, it’s local jails that will be burdened if the offenders are arrested again without the tools to re-adapt into society.

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