**Comparative Criminal Justice Policy**

**United States**
- Prior to the 1970s, the federal and state systems used mandatory sentencing to determine sentence lengths. Sentencing was at the discretion of the judge, who had discretion on the length and type of sentences based on a wide variety of convicted offenses.
- The severity of penalties can also contribute to the rise in the incarceration rate in the United States.
- Mandatory minimum sentencing laws were enacted to increase the severity of sentences for specific crimes, including drug offenses.
- Mandatory sentences generally mean no parole for parole-eligible offenders, regardless of good behavior, and parole board discretion is limited.

**Sweden**
- Over 86% of Swedish prisoners returned from their furloughs on time.
- Modern Swedish prison reform began in the 1950s, with the introduction of programs that focus on rehabilitation and integration into society.
- "Prisoners shall be treated with consideration for their human dignity."
- In 1970, Sweden gave 4,800 inmates two-to-three-day "furloughs.
- "Help ease the difficulties of adjustment after release."
- Over 86% of the total furloughs in Sweden were beneficial.
- This decade, Sweden created a "production-oriented prison job industry.”
- Inmates are also taught about "washing clothes, cooking, and cleaning.

**The Prison Policy Initiative**
- The Prison Policy Initiative (PPI) provides the most current and trustworthy data and statistics for prison reform. Some of their biggest accomplishments include bringing fairness to the prison phone system by protecting incarcerated individuals and advocacy to the Federal Communications Commission to lower the cost of calls from prison to homes, protecting of inmates' voting rights by ensuring video conference visits in some states, and generally protecting the democracy of the United States.

**Final Policy Recommendation:**
1. Shift the overall goal of incarceration from punishment to rehabilitation.
2. Identify, evaluate, and change existing sentencing and penal codes that may be creating a racial bias in the system.
   - The intermediate sentencing would allow cases to be determined more individually, which would combat some of the racial disparity.
   - Allowing leaves of absence so prisoners can maintain a sense of morality and dignity.

**T1.U.S. Prison Cell**
- United States
- Prisons hold
- 2.3 Million
- Inmates

**Swedish Prison Cell**
- Sweden
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