

Second Chance for Georgia

2023 Georgia Justice Project Policy Agenda



ABOUT GEORGIA JUSTICE PROJECT



Georgia Justice Project's mission is to strengthen our community by demonstrating a better way to represent and support individuals in the criminal justice system and reduce barriers to reentry into the community. GJP's work touches every aspect of the criminal justice continuum with two goals:

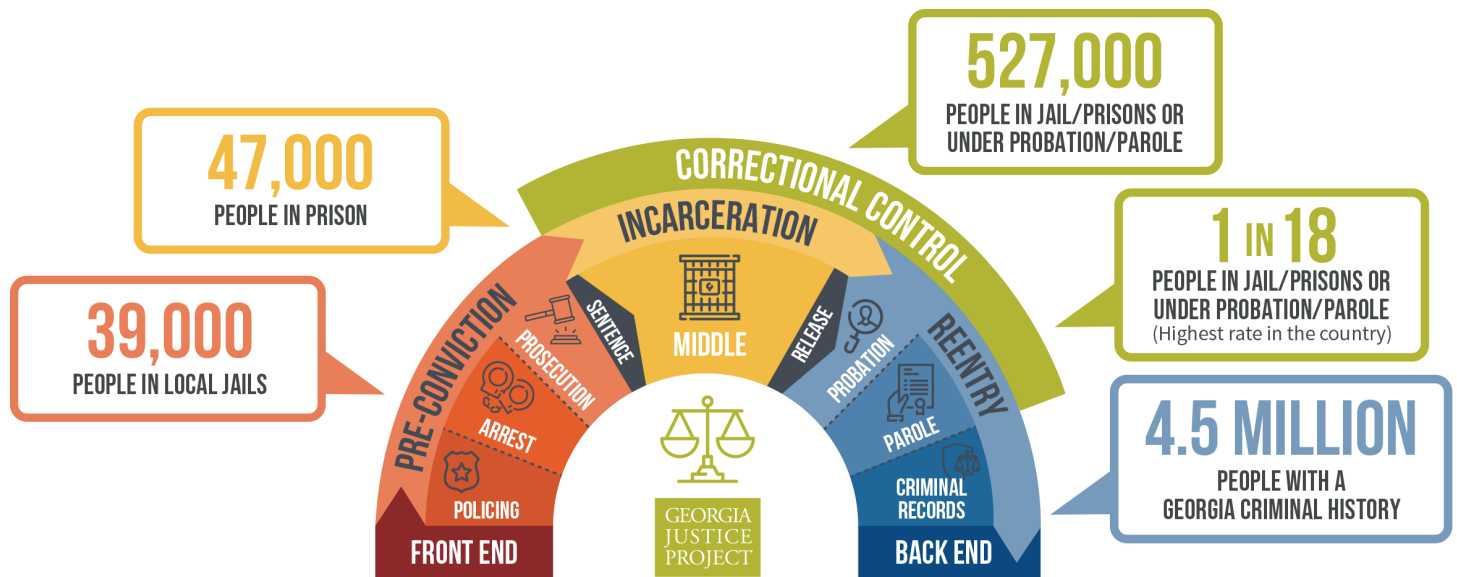
1. Reduce the number of Georgians under correctional control (people in jail/prison or on probation/parole)
2. Reduce reentry barriers for formerly-incarcerated and justice-involved Georgians.

Our work encompasses our three-pronged approach to drive impact: direct service, policy work, and community engagement.

GJP's approach (or theory of change) is to simultaneously work on three distinct levels:

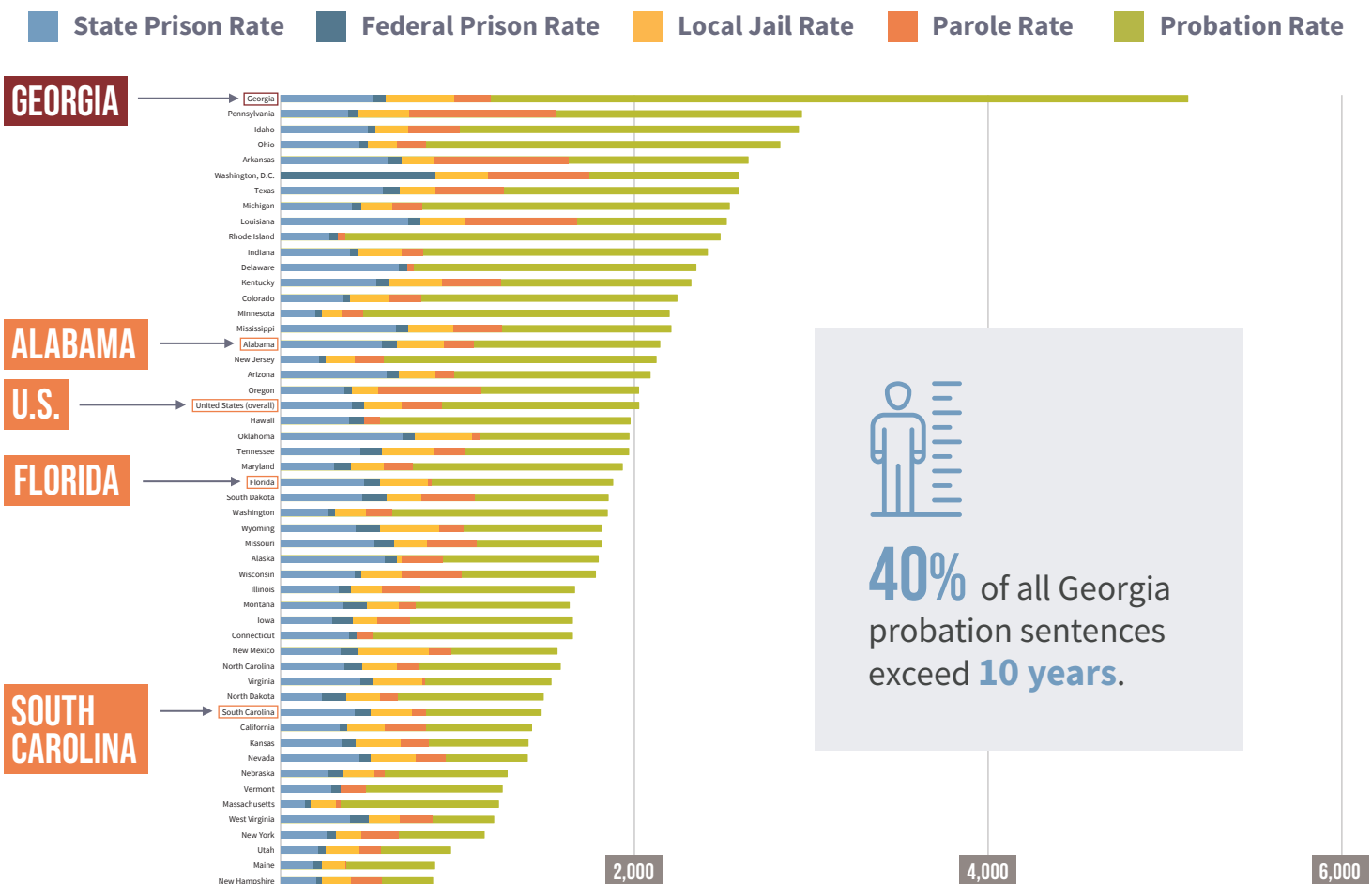


GEORGIA'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM: AN OVERVIEW



RATES OF CORRECTIONAL CONTROL BY STATE

Source: Prison Policy Initiative
Rates are per 100,000 total population in that state



GJP'S APPROACH TO POLICY CHANGE

ROOTED IN DIRECT SERVICE



Reform efforts flow from decades of holistic individual representation

BUILDING BRIDGES



Build coalitions of key stakeholders to identify the best path forward

BIPARTISAN APPROACH



Policies that resonate across the political spectrum

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS



Work alongside Georgia corporations and chambers

PRACTICAL

Real solutions that work on the ground

22 laws changed since 2008



GJP'S POLICY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

POLICY WORK

Since, 2008, GJP has successfully advocated for 22 changed Georgia laws to increase second chances for Georgians.

SB 288 2020

Convictions can come off a criminal record **for the first time in Georgia**. **1.5 million** Georgians could potentially benefit.

SB 105 2021

Creates a pathway for early termination of felony probation sentences. **40,000 Georgians became eligible upon signing.**

SB 10 2022

Reduces automatic driver's license suspensions and offers a path to license reinstatement for the **100,000+ drivers who lose their license after missing traffic court.**

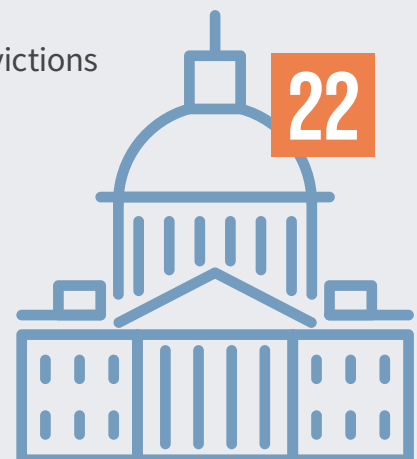
Georgia Justice Project works with state legislators, partner organizations, and other stakeholders to draft bills and advocate for laws that reduce the number of people under correctional control and reduce barriers to reentry for the 4.5 million people who have a Georgia criminal record.

For a full list of GJP's policy accomplishments, please scan the QR code below.



GJP's advocacy has supported **22 changes in Georgia law** reducing barriers to reentry, including:

- Retroactive First Offender
- Removal of food stamp ban for people with felony drug convictions
- Tax incentive for parolee hiring
- Ban the box
- Georgia Fair Business Practices Act
- Mugshot removal
- Employer liability protections for second chance hiring
- Other expansions and revisions to Georgia's record clearing laws



GEORGIA
JUSTICE
PROJECT

2022 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

#GettingGeorgiansBacktoWork



For the third year in a row,
Georgia Justice Project (GJP)
successfully advocated for
reentry reform legislation. GJP's
2022 policy goals were aimed at
#GettingGeorgiansBacktoWork

SUPPORTED BY

METRO
ATLANTA
CHAMBER



GEORGIA CHAMBER

PASSED



**SB 10—championed by GJP—went into effect
July 1, 2022.**

This law reduces automatic driver's license suspensions
and provides a path to reinstatement for people who lost
their license for missing traffic court.

WHY DRIVER'S LICENSE SUSPENSIONS NEED TO BE REFORMED



Every year, **Georgia suspends more than 200,000 driver's licenses** for reasons unrelated to public safety.

80% of Georgians drive to work.
**Almost half of people who lose
their licenses lose their jobs.**

75% of people with suspensions still drive out
of necessity, **leading to 50,000 annual arrests
for driving on a suspended license** – the #1
reason for arrest. Black drivers are 7 times
more likely to be arrested than white drivers in
some counties.

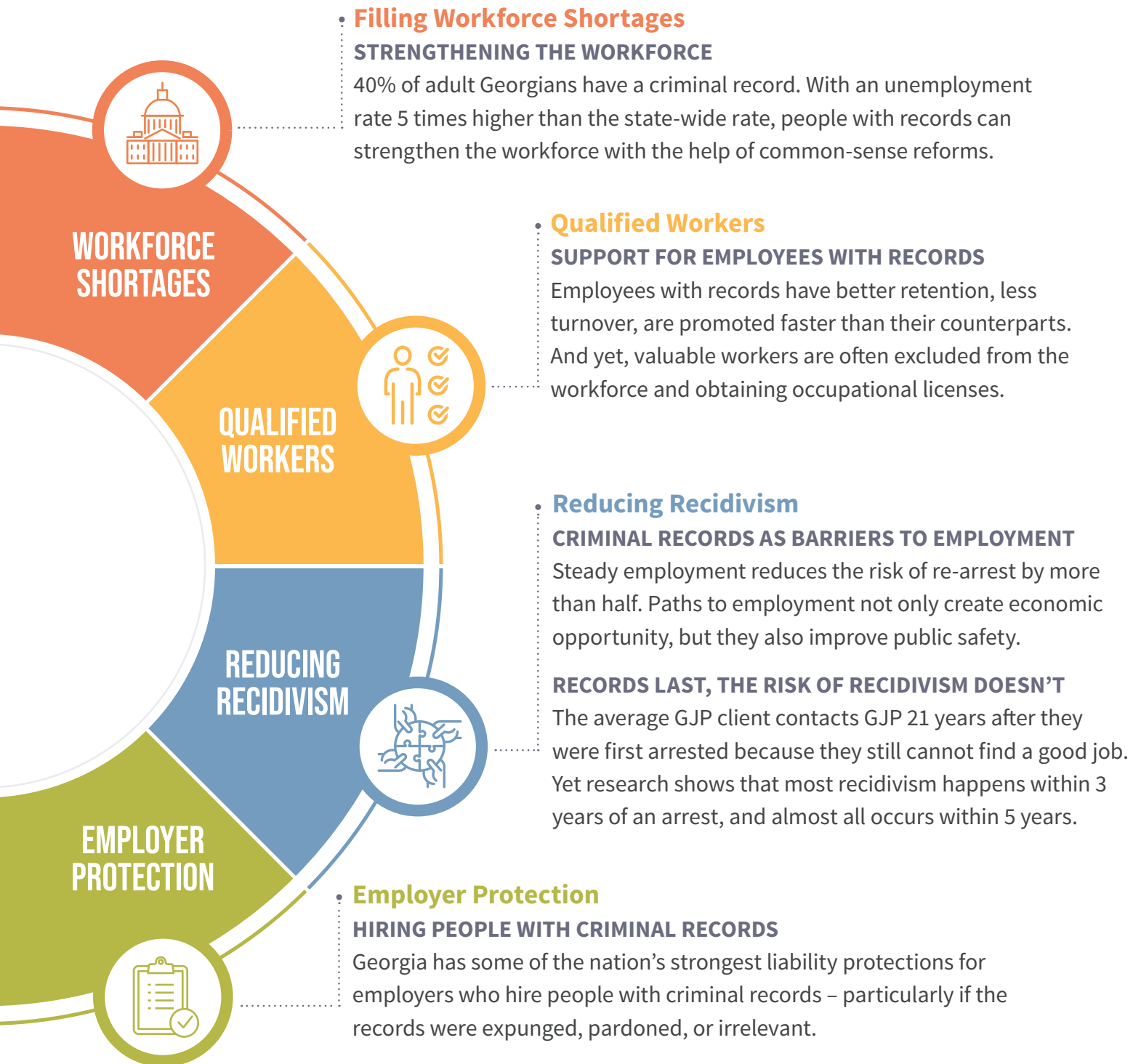
50,000 arrests each year **translates to
450,000 law enforcement hours spent each
year** on non-safety related arrests.



Suspensions lead to **job loss,
further entanglement with
the criminal legal system, and
permanent criminal records** —
pushing deeper cycles of poverty.

SECOND CHANCE HIRING

Research shows that employment is the antidote to recidivism. GJP is advocating for legislative change that will enhance public safety, extend opportunity, and strengthen the workforce in a time of shortages.



GJP is working to dismantle barriers to second chances, strengthen the workforce, and improve public safety. Join us! **Sources available upon request.*

CURRENT POLICY AGENDA

GJP POLICY PRIORITIES

Georgia Justice Project seeks to reduce the number of Georgians who are under correctional control and remove barriers to reentry for formerly justice-involved individuals. Pursuant to this mission, GJP has adopted the following policy priorities for the 2023 legislative session:

OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING: Reducing Regulatory Barriers for a Fair Chance

- 1 in 7 Georgia jobs require an occupational license¹, including 1 in 4 of Georgia's high-demand jobs². 40% of Georgians have a criminal record and may be barred or discouraged from filling these workforce needs – even if their record is old, pardoned, or expunged.
- Uncertainty discourages candidates from pursuing education for a license because they don't know how their record will be considered, a chilling effect on potential applicants.
- Fair access to licensed jobs reduces recidivism. States with more barriers to licensure for people with records have higher recidivism rates than states with less burdens.
- GA can follow the lead of fellow Southern states by giving these residents a fair chance and boosting the workforce in a time of need.

EXPUNGEMENT: Clean Up and Modestly Expand Current Law

- Studies demonstrate that expungement reduces recidivism³, creates opportunity⁴, and strengthens the economy⁵.
- After substantial reforms allowed for expungement of certain convictions in 2020, small issues still need to be cleaned up in order to make the law work better for more Georgians.
- People with otherwise eligible misdemeanor convictions are prevented from accessing the benefits of expungement because current law limits them to two misdemeanor expungements in their life, no matter how old their offenses are or what they have done since.
- More than 80% of Georgia small business owners⁶, and many Chambers of Commerce, support policies to expunge records and open pools of applicants.

ENABLING VICTIM-CENTERED PROGRAMS: Evidentiary Privilege

- Victim-centered programs are options for crime survivors who seek healing through a facilitated process. Restorative justice creates paths for accountability and restoration.
- Unlike the traditional criminal legal system, victims overwhelmingly report satisfaction⁷ and that their experience in restorative justice was fair⁸.
- Participants have dramatically reduced recidivism rates⁹, and those who complete restorative justice programs are more likely to pay restitution¹⁰.
- Adding a privilege to the evidence code for victim-centered programs would mirror similar privileges and enable these programs to flourish.

Sources cited in footnotes are available upon request.

SUPPORTERS & CONTACT INFO

CHAMPIONS

KING &
SPALDING



DELTA

indeed



Georgia Power



Atlanta Gas Light

BANK OF AMERICA



ADVOCATES

ALSTON
& BIRD



GP
Georgia-Pacific

verizon



REINVESTMENT
FUND

Microsoft

PROTECTORS

大成 DENTONS

The Coca-Cola Company

DEFENDERS

BAIN
& COMPANY

Walmart

Trulieve

BONDURANT
MIXSON & ELMORE

parker
hudson

KILPATRICK
TOWNSEND

Seyfarth

C|G|C
COUNCIL
GUNNEMANN
& CHALLY

SYNOVUS

PATRONS

lyft business

Chick-fil-A

amazon

troutman
pepper

GJP Senior Staff

Doug Ammar
Executive Director

Brenda Smeeton
Legal Director

Atoyia Johnson
Social Services Director

Ermis Zayas
Development Director

Board of Directors

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GJP Board Chair
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R. Daniel Beale
Dentons

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Executive Committee Member
Splunk Technology

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The Coca-Cola Company

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Michael Canaras
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UPS

Stephen D. Councill
Executive Committee Member
Councill, Gunneman & Chally

Derin B. Dickerson
Alston & Bird

Von A. Dubose
DuBose Miller

Tywanda Harris Lord
Kilpatrick, Townsend & Stockton LLP

John H. Rains IV
Bondurant, Mixson & Elmore LLP

Lawrence A. Slovensky
Vice Board Chair
King & Spalding

R. Gary Spencer
NAACP Legal Defense &
Education Fund

Asma Surani
Treasurer
Ernst & Young

Meg Taylor
Delta Air Lines

Michele Young
Executive Committee Member
Attorney

For More Information

Contact Wade Askew, Esq
GJP Policy Manager
404-827-0027 ext 214, Wade@GJP.org

**CHANGE IS BOTH VITAL FOR THE STATE'S LONG-TERM PROSPERITY AND
THE RIGHT THING TO DO FOR REHABILITATED INDIVIDUALS.**

"If someone has made a mistake, not only should we NOT hold it against them for the rest of their lives, but we should also honor their rehabilitation and give them access to life's essentials."

Doug Ammar, GJP Executive Director



OUR MISSION

Georgia Justice Project strengthens our community by demonstrating a better way to represent and support individuals in the criminal justice system and reduce barriers to reentry. GJP promotes innovative change through direct legal representation, policy advocacy, education, and coalition building.



GEORGIA JUSTICE PROJECT
transforming our community for over 30 years

438 Edgewood Ave. SE • Atlanta, GA 30312 • (404) 827-0027 • www.GJP.org

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For more information, contact Wade Askeu: Wade@GJP.org, 404.827.0027 ext. 214
or scan the QR code to learn more about GJP's approach to policy change.

