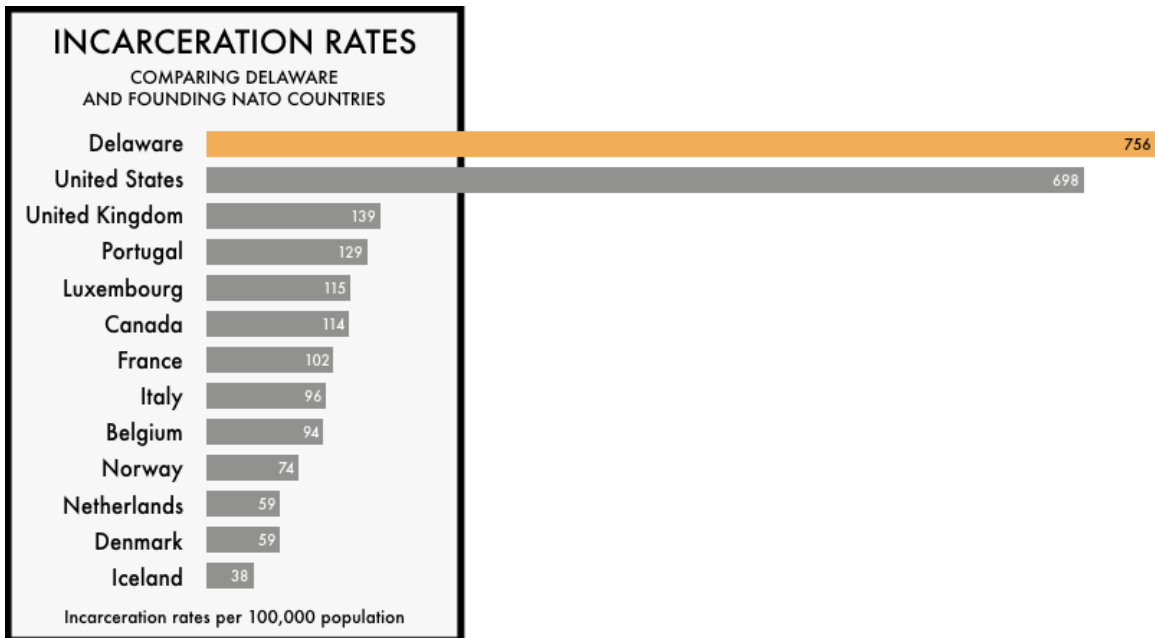




## The League of Women Voters of Delaware Supports HB 5

One of the most significant policy positions of the League of Women Voters related to criminal justice reform is the elimination of mandatory minimum sentencing. We believe judges should have more discretion. Currently, prosecutors often “stack” charges relating to the same conduct that carry mandatory minimums. This can result in quite lengthy sentences. And, this appears to be a very significant factor in Delaware’s high rate of incarceration.

According to a study by the Prison Policy Initiative, if Delaware were a country, we would have an incarceration rate of 756 per 10,000 population. Here is a chart showing Delaware’s incarceration rates compared with the founding NATO countries. As you can see, Delaware is way off the chart, even worse than the U.S. rate, which, itself is higher than any other country in the world.<sup>1</sup>



Source: <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2018.html>

HB 5 would reform concurrent and consecutive sentencing by providing sentencing judges with the discretion to sentence prison time concurrently when appropriate.

According to Attorney General Kathy Jennings, in a statement at a meeting of the Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice (May 14 in Lewes), HB 5 would make a huge difference in the length of sentences. We interpret her comments to mean that this bill could very significantly help achieve our goal of reducing the incarceration rate in Delaware.

We urge you to release and seek speedy enactment of HB 5 that would reform concurrent and consecutive sentencing by providing sentencing judges with the discretion to sentence prison time concurrently when appropriate.

<sup>1</sup> <https://prisonpolicy.org/global/2018.html>