

# Three strikes sentencing law essay samples

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



Crime and mankind have been in existence for as long as one can remember. This has prompted institutions and people to come up with measures to try and combat crime. Many approaches have been developed, and ideas harbored but all seem to suffer shortcomings. Different countries have different approaches to dealing with crime. For instance, in the United States three strikes law and other approaches (get tough) have been in use. Three strikes law was first introduced in 1994 by the state of California. This is after the kidnapping of a twelve year old that resulted to her death. Thereafter, many states adopted the approach too. The approaches have on several occasions been subjected to severe criticism. However, most of the criticism seem to be misplaced (Walsh, 2007).

It would be worth acknowledging that, like everything else, the aforementioned approaches have their cons. However, the evidence available on the effectiveness of the approaches tip the scales in favor of pros. For instance, it can be said that they provide a fix for a flawed justice system. On many occasions, crime offenders have gone free for unconventional reasons. The approaches have enabled the repeat offenders to be separated from the society (Greenwood, 2008). Various reasons (case backlogs, plea bargaining and liberal sentences) have evidently made these offenders avoid facing the law. However, with the introduction of three strikes law many offenders have faced the law and proper actions taken. This has helped keep recidivist criminals away from the public thus preventing the society from any other potential crimes (Greenwood, 2008).

Furthermore, the approaches can be said to have prevented future crimes from happening. This is because many people who had been charged with

any other act of crime, were afraid of being caught again. With this, the law is made even stricter than the previous version. As a result, more paroles leave the state than entering it. It is worth noting that it is the ' media blackmail' that makes these approaches seem ineffective and inefficient (Greenwood, 2008). Overcrowding in our cells has been entirely blamed on the approaches. However, most of the people in jail are there fairly. This is because most of the offenders committed more than two crimes which warrant jail time (Sutton, 2013).

The law applies to three convictions, not three crimes. This statement can be viewed from different perspectives. Some people may view it as an advantage while others may see it as a disadvantage. It is an advantage to the offender as it gives him time to reform. Various reasons may make a crime offender slip through the cracks. From a different perspective, it shows that the approaches do work. This is because it is only people who have committed more than three crimes that are incarcerated (Sutton, 2013). This might not be the case with the other law.

Despite all the criticism, it would be true to say that these approaches have very much been able to reduce crime. Crime in the United States has been reported to be on the decline. However, the rate of decline in most of the states that have adopted the approaches is much higher. This truly shows that the approaches though not perfect have the immense impact. Working towards perfection of these approaches is the way forward rather than keep on criticizing them. This would even make them be more effective than they are now.

## **References**

Greenwood, P. W. (2008). *Three strikes and you're out: estimated benefits and costs of California's new mandatory-sentencing law*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand.

Sutton, J. R. (2013). Symbol and Substance: Effects of California's Three Strikes Law on Felony Sentencing. *Law & Society Review*, 47(1), 37-72.

Walsh, J. E. (2007). *Three strikes laws*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.