



October 2, 2019

Support the Eliminating Discrimination and Creating Corridors to Expand Student Success (ED ACCESS) Act, H.R. 4518 and S. 2553

On behalf of FreedomWorks' activist community, I urge you to contact your representative and senators and ask them to cosponsor the Eliminating Discrimination and Creating Corridors to Expand Student Success (ED ACCESS) Act, H.R. 4518 and S. 2553. Introduced by Reps. David Schweikert (R-Ariz.) and Danny Davis (D-Ill.) and Sens. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), the ED ACCESS Act would strike the language in current law that prohibits any person with a drug felony conviction from being eligible for the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC).

There is a lifetime ban on eligibility for the American Opportunity Tax Credit for any student with an existing felony drug conviction. Exclusions do not exist for any other class of crimes. The ED ACCESS Act would simply equalize the law by striking this exclusion from the code in 26 U.S.C. 25A(b)(2)(D). Frankly, the tax code is not the proper place to address drug policy.

Building on the successes of the First Step Act, Congress must turn its attention to what the second, or next, steps should be in criminal justice reform. Smart-on-crime policies are gaining support and being enacted rapidly across the nation, and Congress should continue to lead in this effort. Breaking down barriers to returning citizens' reentry into society is the primary way, in the current political climate, to do this.

In America, 95 percent of the incarcerated population will return to society one day. There is widespread bipartisan understanding that when this happens, the inability to access education and to secure stable employment contribute massively to high recidivism rates. This means more crime, more victims, and more damage to communities. This bill is one of many avenues that should be pursued in an effort to reverse this trend, by undoing some of the poorly thought out

drug policies of the 1990s that led to over-incarceration and wasted tax dollars with no benefit to public safety.

There is much work to be done in the criminal justice reform space. Fortunately, it continues to represent a rare area of genuine, positive bipartisan agreement. Congress should capitalize on this continued opportunity for the betterment of our whole nation. For these reasons, I urge you to contact your representative and senators and ask them to cosponsor the ED ACCESS Act, H.R. 4518 and S. 2553.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Brandon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Adam Brandon
President, FreedomWorks