



July 24, 2017

Support the Prison Reform and Redemption Act, H.R. 3356

On behalf of FreedomWorks activists nationwide, I urge you to contact your representative and encourage him or her to cosponsor the Prison Reform and Redemption Act, H.R. 3356, introduced by Rep. Doug Collins (R-Ga.). This bill would require the Attorney General to develop an offender risk and needs assessment system and incentivizes offenders to lower their risk of recidivism.

On a fiscal level, this bill simply makes sense. Right now, taxpayers are not getting a return on their investment. In 2005, the Bureau of Justice Statistics an office of the Department of Justice tracked over 400,000 offenders in over 30 states after their release from prison. The study found that within three years 67.8 percent reoffended and in five years 76.6 percent reoffended. This failure rate is unacceptable, and Congress must change the direction by utilizing evidenced-based practices to reduce recidivism.

Thankfully, the states – the laboratories of policy innovation – have shown that rehabilitative programming in state prisons reduces recidivism and enhances public safety. In 2007, for example, Texas began the first phase of its justice reinvestment initiative, using a data-driven approach to corrections to reduce recidivism. Crime in the Lone Star State is now at its lowest rate 1968. More than 30 states, including Georgia and South Carolina, have adopted similar justice reinvestment initiatives.

The Prison Reform and Redemption Act would require the Attorney General to develop a post-sentencing risk and needs assessment. All prisoners in the federal prison system will be assigned recidivism reduction programming. The Bureau of Prisons would be responsible for the implementation of the risk and needs assessments for each prisoner and development of recidivism reduction programming.

Each offender will be assessed for risk on an individual level to develop a comprehensive plan based on his or her need and probability of reoffending. Utilizing private public partnerships in this capacity would allow non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and private sector

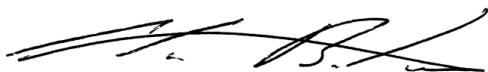
entities to build relationships and community for the most vulnerable citizens in our society. The bill would incentivize prisoners to reduce their risk of recidivism. For every 30 days of successfully completed recidivism reduction programming, prisoners will ten days of time credits. Prisoners can earn an additional five days, for a total of 15 days, after two successful risk assessment periods. Those prisoners who have are considered low or no risk of recidivism can earn an additional five days, for a total of 15, provided that their risk of recidivism doesn't increase over two risk assessment periods.

Certain categories offenders – including violent offenders, sex offenders, and terrorists – would not be eligible to earn time credits.

The Prison Reform and Redemption Act would allow for great access to visitation and phone privileges, create a pilot program to address the heroin and opioid epidemic, and prohibit the use restraints of pregnant offenders unless the offender poses a serious threat. The bill would require the Bureau of Prisons to collect statistical and demographic information to be provided to Congress on an annual basis.

Congress has fallen behind the states on this important issue. While other policy changes – such as sentencing reforms and reentry reforms – are needed, this bill would bring a key component of state-level success to the federal prison system, offering prisoners an opportunity for restorative justice while enhancing public safety. For these reasons, I urge you to contact your representative and encourage him or her to cosponsor the Prison Reform and Redemption Act, H.R. 3356.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Brandon', with a stylized, flowing script.

Adam Brandon
President, FreedomWorks