

1 SJR102
2 193179-1
3 By Senators Ward and Whatley
4 RFD:
5 First Read: 13-MAR-18

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7
8 RECOGNIZING APRIL 2018 AS SECOND CHANCE MONTH.

9
10 WHEREAS, every person is endowed with human dignity
11 and value; and

12 WHEREAS, redemption and second chances are American
13 values; and

14 WHEREAS, an estimated 65 million American citizens
15 have a criminal record; and

16 WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Justice reports that
17 over 620,000 individuals returned to their community from
18 state and federal prisons in 2015; and

19 WHEREAS, those individuals who have paid their debt
20 after committing a crime face significant barriers, also known
21 as collateral consequences, to reintegrating into society; and

22 WHEREAS, the Council of State Governments reports
23 that the number of legal collateral consequences of a criminal
24 conviction exceeds 48,000; and

25 WHEREAS, many of these consequences are mandatory,
26 without taking into account the seriousness of the offense,
27 the time passed since the offense, the individual's efforts to

1 make amends and earn back the public's trust, or whether the
2 consequence has a proven public safety benefit; and

3 WHEREAS, gaining meaningful employment is one of the
4 most significant predictors of successful reentry and reducing
5 future criminal activity; and

6 WHEREAS, ninety percent of those who have previously
7 been incarcerated struggle to find employment because of both
8 societal and legal barriers which are often not directly
9 related to the offense committed or any proven public safety
10 benefit; and

11 WHEREAS, every jurisdiction has laws which prohibit
12 individuals with a criminal record from working in certain
13 industries, such as cosmetology, operation of arcade games,
14 automotive parts recycling, camping equipment sales, boiler
15 inspection, and many others; and

16 WHEREAS, over 60 percent of employers report they
17 would not be willing to hire someone with any criminal record
18 and many employers utilize a blanket no-hire policy for
19 individuals with a criminal record; and

20 WHEREAS, education has also been shown to be a
21 significant predictor of successful reentry; and

22 WHEREAS, those with a criminal record have lower
23 levels of educational attainment than the general population
24 and have significant difficulty acquiring admission to and
25 funding for educational programs; and

1 WHEREAS, individuals convicted of certain crimes are
2 barred from receiving the financial aid necessary to acquire
3 additional skills and knowledge; and

4 WHEREAS, many individuals, regardless of their
5 efforts to live positively, are denied admission to
6 institutions of higher education because of their criminal
7 record, despite a lack of empirical evidence showing a campus
8 safety risk; and

9 WHEREAS, people with a criminal history also face
10 significant barriers in securing a place to live; and

11 WHEREAS, fifty-six percent of landlords are
12 unwilling to rent to an individual with a criminal record
13 containing a felony charge and 32 percent are unwilling to
14 rent to an individual with a previous misdemeanor conviction;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, individuals with criminal history are also
17 barred from seeking access to public housing or receiving
18 public housing assistance; and

19 WHEREAS, this inability to access housing has been
20 found to increase the number of individuals returning to
21 prison; and

22 WHEREAS, many people with a criminal history also
23 face other significant challenges such as an inability to
24 regain voting rights, volunteer in their community, and secure
25 identification documentation, and incur significant debt as a
26 result of their conviction and incarceration; and

1 WHEREAS, all of these barriers prevent the 65
2 million Americans with criminal records from contributing
3 fully to their families and communities; and

4 WHEREAS, these barriers can contribute to
5 recidivism, which increases victimization and decreases public
6 safety; and

7 WHEREAS, the inability to find gainful employment
8 and other collateral consequences of conviction inhibit the
9 economic mobility of people with criminal history, which
10 negatively impacts the well-being of their children and
11 families for generations; and

12 WHEREAS, the legal barriers and stigma associated
13 with a criminal record results in lost human capital and lost
14 economic output for the United States; and

15 WHEREAS, Charles Colson used his second chance
16 following his incarceration for a Watergate-related crime to
17 found Prison Fellowship, the nation's largest outreach to
18 prisoners and their families; he died on April 21, 2012; and

19 WHEREAS, a robust coalition of businesses,
20 congregations, and other organizations across the country has
21 celebrated Second Chance Month since April 2017 through
22 events, races, briefings, social media campaigns, advocacy,
23 press, and other activities; and

24 WHEREAS, the designation of April as Second Chance
25 Month contributes to increased public awareness about the
26 challenges faced by those who have paid their debt, and

1 opportunities for individuals, employers, congregations, and
2 communities to extend second chances; now therefore,

3 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH
4 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That the State of Alabama
5 recognizes April 2018 as Second Chance Month; honors the work
6 of communities, governmental institutions, nonprofits,
7 congregations, employers, and individuals who strive to remove
8 unnecessary legal and societal barriers that prevent
9 individuals with a criminal record from becoming productive
10 members of society; and calls upon the people of Alabama to
11 observe Second Chance Month through actions and programs that
12 promote awareness of the challenges facing those who have paid
13 their debt and opportunities to unlock a second chance.

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this
15 resolution be sent to the President of the United States, the
16 Vice President of the United States, the United States
17 Attorney General, Governor Kay Ivey, the Commissioner of the
18 Alabama Department of Corrections, and to each member of the
19 Alabama Congressional Delegation.