

November 28, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Feinstein:

We, the International Community Corrections Association (ICCA) and National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA), add our voices to the many urging passage of the First Step Act before Congress adjourns for the year. The First Step Act of 2018 (S. 3649) is bipartisan, common sense legislation based on innovations adopted and tested in the states over many years. The bill would require the federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to adopt a risk and needs assessment system to determine the recidivism risk of each prisoner as part of the intake process and to provide evidence-based recidivism reduction programming based on each individual's criminogenic needs. Eligible inmates who successfully complete the recidivism reduction programming and/or other productive activities shall earn time credits allowing them to complete their sentences in a residential reentry center or in home confinement. Further, the bill would require BOP to ensure there is sufficient prerelease custody capacity to accommodate all who are eligible.

The First Step Act would also restore judicial discretion for some non-violent offenses where federal mandatory minimum sentences have been found to be too rigid, reduce the enhanced mandatory minimum sentence for certain firearm offenses, and apply the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 retroactively.

ICCA members have been at the forefront of the evidence-based practices movement for decades. ICCA members operate residential reentry centers and have extensive experience delivering community-based services to justice-involved individuals. NCJA members are the state criminal justice planning agencies who fund and oversee community-based services and are responsible for planning across the justice system. NCJA members are keenly aware that successful reentry rests on the provision and quality of community-based services. ICCA and NCJA look forward to working closely with BOP on implementation of the bill.

The First Step Act is important legislation and we urge its swift passage.

Sincerely,



Ellen Donnarumma
President
International Community Corrections Association



Christian Kervick
President
National Criminal Justice Association