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December 20, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Attorneys General support for action on the FIRST STEP Act

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

As our jurisdictions' Attorneys General, public safety and the faithful execution of the law fall squarely on our shoulder. Constituents hold us uniquely accountable for ensuring our communities provide a safe place to work and raise a family. To that end, we have supported legislation that strongly punishes criminal conduct while making sure people exiting prison pose less of a threat than when they entered.

Unfortunately, the federal justice system has not made similar improvements. With half of the people leaving federal incarceration who rejoin communities ending up back in the criminal justice system, our current justice policies are on the wrong track.

That is why we are writing you today concerning, the FIRST STEP Act. This legislation provides additional tools and flexibility to the Federal Bureau of Prisons, better equipping our correctional system to ensure that people coming back into our communities are prepared to do so as responsible citizens who do not pose a risk to our communities. The bill also puts more tools in the hands of prosecutors, allowing them to seek the most appropriate sentence for the individual's crimes.

This legislation enjoys broad support within law enforcement and the criminal justice policy community across the ideological spectrum. The International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Fraternal Order of Police, the National District Attorneys Association, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Professionals, and many other law enforcement organizations have endorsed the bill. Associations of cities and mayors, such as the United States Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities, support the legislation. And think-tanks and advocacy groups from the right and the left have also lent their support for this legislation, including the Heritage Foundation, the American Civil Liberties Union, Freedomworks, the National

Urban League, the American Conservative Union, the Public Defender Association, Americans for Prosperity, and the Center for American Progress, among many others.

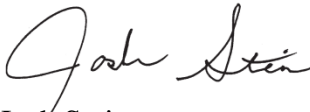
Although we understand the concerns some have expressed with the legislation, our positive experience with similar reforms in our own states and numerous other states give us a nuanced and comprehensive perspective. This legislation incentivizes federal inmates to participate in recidivism-reducing programming. It calls for inmates to be housed in prison facilities closer to their families, consistent with research that shows that doing so increases the chances of successful re-entry to society. And it allows low risk offenders who successfully complete job training and educational programming to return to the community under appropriate supervision.

On a bipartisan basis, we request that Congress enact legislation to strengthen our criminal justice system to better safeguard the people of our states. We believe the FIRST STEP Act contains many helpful reforms and strongly encourage Congress to provide the bill with a full and open debate.

Sincerely yours,



Karl A. Racine
District of Columbia Attorney General



Josh Stein
North Carolina Attorney General



Sean Reyes
Utah Attorney General



Cynthia H. Coffman
Colorado Attorney General



Matthew P. Denn
Delaware Attorney General



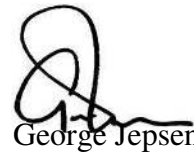
Pam Bondi
Florida Attorney General



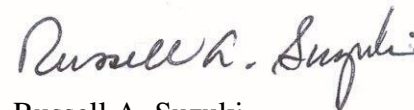
Ken Paxton
Texas Attorney General



Xavier Becerra
California Attorney General



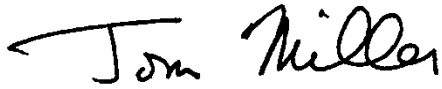
George Jepsen
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New Jersey Attorney General



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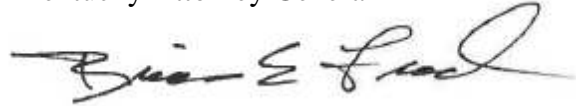
Mike Hunter
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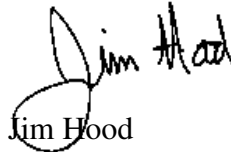
Andy Beshear
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Brian Frosh
Maryland Attorney General



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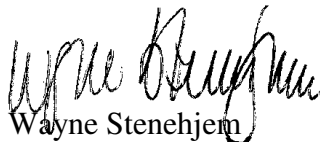
Jim Hood
Mississippi Attorney General



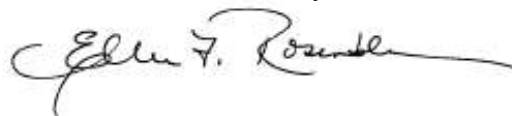
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