

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

1 SJR102

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4 ENROLLED, SJR102,

5 RECOGNIZING APRIL 2018 AS SECOND CHANCE MONTH.

6  
7 WHEREAS, every person is endowed with human dignity  
8 and value; and

9 WHEREAS, redemption and second chances are American  
10 values; and

11 WHEREAS, an estimated 65 million American citizens  
12 have a criminal record; and

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

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

19 WHEREAS, the Council of State Governments reports  
20 that the number of legal collateral consequences of a criminal  
21 conviction exceeds 48,000; and

22 WHEREAS, many of these consequences are mandatory,  
23 without taking into account the seriousness of the offense,  
24 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

1 identification documentation, and incur significant debt as a  
2 result of their conviction and incarceration; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

1           WHEREAS, the designation of April as Second Chance  
2 Month contributes to increased public awareness about the  
3 challenges faced by those who have paid their debt, and  
4 opportunities for individuals, employers, congregations, and  
5 communities to extend second chances; now therefore,

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

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

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President and Presiding Officer of the Senate

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Speaker of the House of Representatives

SJR102  
Senate 13-MAR-18  
I hereby certify that the within Senate Joint Resolution  
originated in and was adopted by the Senate.

Patrick Harris,  
Secretary.

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House of Representatives  
Adopted: 20-MAR-18

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By: Senator Ward