



# CERTIFICATE of RECOGNITION

*By virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution of Virginia in the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, there is hereby officially recognized:*

## **SECOND CHANCE MONTH**

**WHEREAS**, redemption and second chances are American values; and

**WHEREAS**, more than 95% of incarcerated offenders will return to the community after serving time in prison or jail, or completing terms of correctional supervision; and

**WHEREAS**, nearly 13,000 offenders are released to the community each year after repaying their debt to society; and

**WHEREAS**, evidence supports that programming and reentry services are transformational in providing opportunities for offenders to change; and

**WHEREAS**, Virginia's prison system has the lowest recidivism rate in the country for the third year in a row at 23.4%; and

**WHEREAS**, individuals with a criminal history face numerous challenges in finding employment, housing, health care and transportation, and these challenges may contribute to recidivism; and

**WHEREAS**, Virginia's prison system offers effective programs and services for offenders, including provision of substance abuse treatment, mental health services, academic and career and technical education, faith-based opportunities and work skills through prison jobs; and

**WHEREAS**, effective reentry services for parents in the criminal justice system interrupts the cycle of generational crime by equipping parents to become effective role models and establish new paths for youth; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commonwealth partners with many committed local agencies, non-profit groups and faith-based groups to support and mentor returning citizens and their families; and

**WHEREAS**, former offenders in Virginia who have paid their debt to society and are living in a law abiding manner will have their civil rights restored so they are equipped to fully enter the community and participate in the legitimate economy; and

**WHEREAS**, reentry services result in lasting public safety through transformed lives and create safer communities across the Commonwealth for all citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, the designation of May as Second Chance Month contributes to increased public awareness of these issues;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Ralph S. Northam, do hereby recognize May 2019 as **SECOND CHANCE MONTH** in our **COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**, and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens.



  
Governor

  
Secretary of the Commonwealth