



May 2025

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Grace Meng
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen Moran and Rogers, Ranking Members Van Hollen and Meng:

Right On Crime writes to this committee to express its strong support for the funding of the First Step Act. Right On Crime is a national campaign of the Texas Public Policy Foundation that supports conservative criminal justice solutions resulting in less crime, fewer victims, and safer communities. The movement was born in Texas in 2007 and has led the way in implementing conservative criminal justice reforms across the states and federally, including the First Step Act.

On Dec. 21, 2018, President Trump signed the First Step Act (P.L. 115-391) into law after it passed through Congress with wide bipartisan margins in both chambers. Through this bill, Congress authorized \$75 million to be appropriated annually to the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) for fiscal years 2019 through 2023.¹ Since then, the First Step Act has enjoyed specific funding for its implementation.²

The First Step Act was a tremendous bipartisan accomplishment and sought to improve the federal criminal justice system by enhancing public safety while using government resources more efficiently. Prior to the First Step Act the recidivism rate among federal offenders is about 50%.³ However, since the passage of the First Step Act, the rearrest rate has dropped significantly. In fact, according to the Department of Justice's 2024 First Step Act report to

¹ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/756/text>.

² See, e.g., <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BUDGET-2025-BUD/pdf/BUDGET-2025-BUD-14.pdf>.

³ https://www.ussc.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/research-and-publications/research-publications/2016/recidivism_overview.pdf.



Congress, the average recidivism rate among the nearly 45,000 federal prisoners who benefitted from the First Step Act is only 9.7 percent. Around 95% of people who enter our federal prison system will one day return home into our communities.⁴ It is in society's best interest that their time in prison is productive and rehabilitative so that they do not recidivate once their sentence is complete. Congress made its commitment to public safety clear when it passed the First Step Act; we now urge you to provide the full amount of funding authorized for its full implementation.

The First Step Act is a smart return on investment. It has proven effective in reducing crime and promoting public safety since its passage, it is less likely that an offender will commit crimes once released. The act is, first and foremost, a public safety law aimed at making America safer. And its implementation is critical to achieve a safer, more prosperous country. It is because of this promise to improve public safety that Congress has consistently appropriated funds specifically for implementation of the First Step Act.

This law is a vital part of President Trump's public safety agenda and will help fight crime across our nation. Right On Crime appreciates your thoughtful review and consideration in fully funding the First Step Act.

If there are further questions or information needed, please contact Rachel Wright at rwright@rightoncrime.com.

Sincerely,

Brett Tolman
Executive Director
Right On Crime

⁴ <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/reentry.pdf>.