

U.S. Rep. Gallagher: Votes in support of criminal justice reform

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Washington, D.C. – Today Congressman Mike Gallagher voted in support of the revised version of the First Step Act, a bipartisan criminal justice reform package that focuses on reducing rampant recidivism among federal prisoners, reforming select sentencing laws, and increasing community safety. After the bill passed the House, Rep. Gallagher released the following statement:

“At the core of the First Step Act is redemption – a fundamental principle of our justice system. The reality is, most inmates in our federal prison system will someday be released. By making sure they get the training and education they need to succeed upon release, this legislation goes a long way toward making sure they are productive members of their communities and don’t return to a life of crime.”

Key Points of the First Step Act of 2018

Reduces Recidivism and Increases Public Safety: The bill creates a risk and needs assessment system that will ensure each prisoner’s risk of re-offending is assessed. The First Step Act also:

- Creates a risk and needs assessment system that will ensure each prisoner’s risk of re-offending is assessed;
- Provides evidence-based recidivism reduction programming for federal prisoners;
- Provides incentives to federal prisoners for participating in First Step

programming, including the earning of time credits towards a pre-release custody at a halfway house or home confinement; and

- Excludes violent and high risk criminals, including fentanyl traffickers, from using time credits.

Reforming Select Sentencing Laws: Under the First Step Act, sentencing is made fairer through narrow reforms. Namely, the First Step Act:

- Clarifies that enhanced penalties for using a firearm during a crime of violence or drug crime should be reserved for repeat offenders of such crimes;
- Reduces the three-strike penalty for non-violent drug offenses from life imprisonment to 25 years;
- Broadens mandatory penalties for serious violent offenders;
- Expands the existing federal safety valve to include more low-level, non-violent offenders and maintains safeguards to prohibit violent criminals from potentially benefiting from reduced sentences; and
- Allows for the retroactive application of the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 for drug offenders sentenced under the “crack disparity” who petition for a reconsideration of their sentence.

Reauthorizing the Second Chance Act of 2007: The First Step Act reauthorizes and streamlines eight Second Chance Act programs and repeals four that have not been funded by Congress.

Supported by: The Fraternal Order of Police, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National District Attorney’s Association, Former Federal Prosecutors, Prison Fellowship, American Correctional Association, Right on Crime, and more.