

July 13, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
H-204, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Majority Leader
H-107, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Democratic Whip
1705 Longworth House Office Building,
Washington DC 20515

RE: Comprehensive Criminal Justice Reform & HR 3713

Dear Speaker Ryan and Democratic Leader Pelosi,

We, the undersigned organizations, applaud Congress' bipartisan efforts to reform federal laws that have resulted in the mass incarceration of far too many persons, disproportionately persons of color, for far too long at great economic, social, and moral costs. The progress that has been made is the result of the tireless efforts of members of Congress, Congressional staffers, advocates, lawyers, and those who have been directly impacted by mass incarceration in America, including formerly and currently incarcerated individuals and their families.

During this incredible moment and crossroads in our nation's history, we are writing to you to detail what we believe to be necessary in accomplishing comprehensive criminal justice reform during this Congress. We hope that as the Leaders in your respective parties, you will work together to ensure that the provisions highlighted below are incorporated into legislation brought to the floor for a vote and eventually sent to the President for his signature.

First, it is important that Congress include specific reforms pertaining to juvenile offenders. Based on neurological and behavioral development science, the U.S. Supreme Court has continually found that "children are different" under the U.S. Constitution when it comes to their treatment in the criminal justice system. Congress should include reforms that create judicial sentencing review after no more than 20 years for individuals who committed their crimes as children, eliminate the use of solitary confinement on juvenile offenders held in federal custody, and allow juvenile offenders convicted of non-violent offenses to have their records sealed and expunged.

Second, it is imperative that criminal justice reform include the sentencing reform provisions currently found in H.R. 3713. The inclusion of these provisions on the "front-end" will help rectify past sentencing injustices affecting thousands of individuals currently serving harsh mandatory minimums for non-violent drug offenses. These policy changes would provide hope to so many individuals currently serving in the federal prison system, as well as their family members, who have been deprived of America's unending promise of opportunity and second

chances. It is our steadfast belief that any reform effort undertaken by this Congress needs to include these reforms in order to make right past wrongs and ensure that we do not repeat the same mistakes in the future.

Lastly, policy changes should also fundamentally reform our Corrections system. This can be accomplished by reviewing and updating rehabilitative programing in the federal prison system, allowing prisoners to earn good time for successful completion of such programming, and providing necessary re-entry services to returning citizens to maximize their successful transition back into society. In addition, the elderly offender early release program created by the Second Chance Act of 2007 should be made permanent and a mechanism should be created that allows for the prompt correction of inaccurate arrest-records for employment-related purposes.

Congress has an incredible and historic opportunity to do something that could impact many lives in this generation of America. We ask that you take full advantage of that opportunity and ensure that when a bill is finally sent to the President's desk that it will truly be comprehensive in scope. By including the provisions highlighted above, which are also supported by citizens around the country, Congress will pass legislation that truly reforms our justice system.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth

W. Haywood Burns Institute

Human Rights Watch

Amnesty International

Robert F. Kennedy Juvenile Justice Collaborative

The Southern Poverty Law Center

Center for Children's Law and Policy

Juvenile Law Center

Coalition for Juvenile Justice

Campaign for Youth Justice

National Juvenile Justice Network

Drug Policy Alliance

National Juvenile Defender Center

Children's Action Alliance

Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States

Interfaith Action for Human Rights

National Religious Campaign Against Torture

National Council of Jewish Women

Bethel AME Church Woodbury NJ

Union for Reform Judaism

Church of Scientology National Affairs Office

Independence: A Family of Services

Committee for Public Counsel Services

Florida Center for Capital Representation

South Carolina Christian Action Council

Justice 360

Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency	TeamChild
The New England Juvenile Defender Center	American Friends Service Committee
Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers	Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance
Florida Juvenile Resentencing and Review Project	ACLU of Nevada
JustGeorgia	Ohio Juvenile Justice Coalition
Columbia Legal Services	The Pendulum Foundation
Restore Justice Illinois	Juvenile Justice Initiative of Illinois
Utah Juvenile Defender Attorneys	New Jersey Parents Caucus
The Louisiana Center for Children's Rights	Delaware's Office of Defense Services
Colorado Office of the Alternate Defense Counsel	The Colorado Juvenile Defender Center
The National Immigration Law Center	Southern Juvenile Defender Center
Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform	The Prison Law Office
National Center for Transgender Equality	National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
Justice for Families	The Arc of the United States
LatinoJustice PRLDEF	National Association of Social Workers
Citizens for Juvenile Justice	National Employment Law Project
National Action Network	Youth Sentencing & Reentry Project
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee	Call To Do Justice
Fitting The Description	DC Lawyers for Youth
Coalition on Human Needs	DC Ranger Task Force
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law	StoptheDrugWar.org
Ella Baker Center for Human Rights	The Aleph Institute
The Daniel Initiative	The Phillips Black Project

National Disability Rights Network

Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Center for Public Representation

National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

National Center for Lesbian Rights

Women Who Never Give Up

Mommieactivist and sons

National Youth Advocate Program

Illinois Coalition for the Fair Sentencing of Children

Center for Educational Excellence in Alternative Settings

South Carolina Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America