



THE  
AMERICAN  
CONSERVATIVE  
UNION  
FOUNDATION

Center for Criminal  
Justice Reform

March 2, 2017

The Honorable Brad Zaun  
Iowa Senate  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
1007 East Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

*RE: SB 1173*

Dear Chairman Zaun:

The American Conservative Union Foundation (ACUF) Center for Criminal Justice Reform applauds the efforts of the Iowa legislature in working to reform the criminal justice system. The policies contained in SB 1173 will help keep families intact, reel in government spending, and improve public safety in the Hawkeye State.

Over the past decade, states across the nation have begun to take on criminal justice reforms similar to those contained in SB 1173, and have achieved great results. This legislation would eliminate the one-size-fits-all sentencing guidelines that for years have overcrowded our prisons and diverted already scarce resources away from the most serious class of offenders. Untying the hands of judges will allow for justice to be applied fairly and rationally for all concerned.

By reducing spending on offenders who are not a threat to the public, Iowa can better allocate resources to support law enforcement, assist victims, and focus on more serious offenders. States such as South Carolina, Georgia, Maryland, and Oklahoma have all taken up similar reforms to SB 1173 in the past years. In each of these states, prison populations have declined without adversely impacting public safety.

As you consider SB 1173, we hope you will keep in mind the impacts on Iowa's taxpayers, families, and the effectiveness of the criminal justice system as a whole.

### **About ACUF**

The American Conservative Union Foundation ("ACUF") is one of the nation's oldest organizations representing grassroots conservatives throughout the United States. Founded more than four decades ago by William F. Buckley, ACUF works to advance our core values of liberty, personal responsibility, and fiscal responsibility – all of which are impacted by criminal justice reform.

As part of its educational mission, ACUF also compiles ratings of every federal and state legislator in the United States. These ratings help the public understand the positions of policy makers, based

objectively on their individual voting records rather than their rhetoric. Criminal justice reform votes have been included in the ratings in recent years. All ACUF ratings can be found at: <http://acuratings.conservative.org>.

In addition, ACUF co-hosts the annual Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Washington, DC. The conference draws thousands of conservative, grassroots activists from across the country. We recently concluded CPAC '17, where Criminal Justice Reform was the topic of two major panels. Video of these two panels can be found at [www.facebook.com/acufforjustice](http://www.facebook.com/acufforjustice).

### **Conclusion**

The first duty of government is to keep our citizens safe. In order to do so, conservatives must hold those making criminal justice policy accountable, not just for the spending of taxpayer dollars, but for the results (or lack thereof) that they generate. Legislation like SB 1173 furthers these goals.

Thank you for your service to the people of Iowa. We look forward to working with you on criminal justice reform and other issues in the future. Should you have any questions, or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at 202.347.9388.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pat Nolan".

Pat Nolan  
*Director*