



THE  
AMERICAN  
CONSERVATIVE  
UNION



CONCERNED  
VETERANS  
FOR AMERICA



AMERICANS FOR  
**PROSPERITY**  
NORTH CAROLINA



PRISON  
FELLOWSHIP



June 17, 2019

Dear Representative:

It is often said that America is a land of second chances and redemption. However, for those with a criminal record, that second chance is often much harder to come by. The collateral consequences that follow those convicted of a crime present significant obstacles to employment, housing, education, and other critical services. Without upward mobility, it's no surprise that so many return to prison. This dynamic affects us all. Every case of recidivism means another crime, victim, court case, and broken family.

That is why our organizations and other national leaders have been closely following the Second Chance Act in North Carolina. If passed, this bill will give North Carolinians who have made a mistake the opportunity for a true second chance at life. We believe that those who are able to demonstrate their remorse, redemption, and rehabilitation by establishing a post-conviction record of character and integrity should be able to break free of the collateral consequences through an expunction.

Of course, wiping the slate clean for those who continue to pose a public safety threat makes no sense. But someone with a non-violent record who has completed his/her sentence and has been a model citizen for a period of time is a minimal safety risk.

Empirical research has shown that most reoffending takes place within the first two years following an initial offense. The longer someone can stay on the straight-and-narrow, the greater chance he/she has of never returning to the justice system. In fact, after seven years have passed since a person's last offense, he/she is no more likely to commit a new crime than the average North Carolinian who has never had any interaction with the system in the first place.

Why does this matter? For most people, having a conviction on their public records is the equivalent of the economic death penalty. Studies show that not only is someone with a record much less likely to even be interviewed for a job, but if he/she does obtain employment, there is a 10%-40% reduction in

future earnings. An expungement would recognize self-improvement and provide economic empowerment to a large number of North Carolinians.

North Carolina courts hand out nearly 100,000 convictions each year. While we undoubtedly believe that those who break the law must be held accountable for their actions, we also understand that not every crime is deserving of a lifetime of consequences. If an individual has served his/her time and demonstrated their commitment to rehabilitation, he/she should have an opportunity to fully reintegrate back into society.

The undersigned organizations support second chances and firmly believe that criminal justice policies should strive for both justice and mercy, all without compromising public safety. Efforts that support the successful reintegration into society and encourage productivity are directly correlated to lower recidivism rates and safer communities. Establishing an avenue for those who have made mistakes to get a fresh start, is not only the right moral thing to do, but the safe thing to do.

Should you have any questions, or need additional information, please feel free to contact any of the signatories below.

Sincerely,



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*American Conservative Union*



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*Faith & Freedom Coalition*



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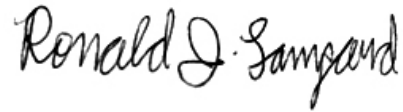
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