



FOSTERING SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION

VALUE

Most Americans agree that after completing a criminal sentence, people should have an opportunity to successfully rejoin their communities. The notion of second chances is crucial to a successful criminal justice system that uses a responsible and pragmatic approach over a purely punitive attitude.

PROBLEM

However, people coming out of prison tend to face a series of obstacles to successfully rejoining communities. Several states restrict people's access to social services, make it difficult to get a job, and ban people from voting. These restrictions have devastating effects on previously incarcerated individuals and make re-entry extremely challenging and can increase the likelihood that he or she will return to prison, at avoidable human and monetary cost.

SOLUTION

Our policies should focus on how to help people stay out of prison, not somehow encourage their return. We need policies that help people rejoin their communities, settle in, and find employment. Making life more difficult for people coming out of prison only serves to further punish people and reduce their community involvement. Everyone should be granted the privileges of full citizenship, and formerly incarcerated individuals should be provided with the tools to not only reintegrate into their communities but build their communities up.

ACTION

Urge your Legislature to remove any existing employment, social service or voting bans, and to establish and fund incarceration and post-incarceration programs specifically devoted to educating incarcerated and previously incarcerated individuals.