



## SOLUTIONS & ACTIONS TO

# Foster Successful Reentry into the Community

Everyone is entitled to a second chance to become a productive member of society. However, recently released individuals face a series of obstacles to successful reintegration. Several states have instituted barriers to reentry including bans on voting, restrictions on accessing social services, and employment limitations.

### 1. Create an Office of Family Affairs with the Bureau of Prisons

Congress and state governments should encourage the collaboration of probate, family, and criminal courts prior to an individual's release by establishing an office tasked with maintaining family affairs, requiring that incarcerated people are sentenced to prisons near their support networks, and funding legal and counseling services to facilitate family unification.

### 2. Allow Formerly Incarcerated People to Visit Prisons and Jails

Congress and state governments should prohibit parole and probation policies that automatically prevent formerly incarcerated people from visiting prisons and jails.

### 3. Improve “Hallway Houses”

Congress, and local and state governments should pass legislation that requires the inspection of halfway house living conditions by qualified specialists; funds community-based halfway houses and treatment over privatized entities; and prioritizes the hiring of formerly incarcerated individuals to staff halfway houses.

### 4. Ban the Box

State, local, and federal governments should repeal post-conviction consequences that hamper successful reentry, including barriers to voting, employment, housing, serving on juries, and social services, and prohibit the use of criminal background checks for employment purposes that are not specifically related to the job.

### 5. Provide Transitional Services

State, local and federal governments should institute graduated re-entry and vocational programs, which provide structured transitional services to individuals within a year of release, such as the Montgomery Pre-Release Center in Montgomery, Alabama, that focuses on securing a job prior to release.

### 6. Create Vocational Programs

Legislatures should establish and fund incarceration and post-incarceration programs specifically devoted to educating incarcerated and previously incarcerated people. These education programs should include vocational programs intended to provide job skills.

## 7. Expand Housing Options

Congress should change the definition of “homeless” to incorporate people who have been incarcerated for more than 90 days for the purpose of expanding housing options available to formerly incarcerated individuals.

## 8. Provide a Second Chance

State, local, and federal governments should adopt policies that expand the Second Chance Act of 2007, which intends to promote successful reintegration following incarceration by expanding the release of elderly incarcerated individuals, expanding mentoring programs and jobs programming, and providing additional skills training.<sup>1</sup>

## 9. Make Re-entry LGBTQ Inclusive

State, local and federal governments should require that re-entry programs are competent in providing support to LGBTQ individuals.

## 10. Expand Expungement/Sealing/Vacatur

Congress and state governments should expand the availability of record sealing, expungement, and vacatur for individuals with criminal records.

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<sup>1</sup> 42 USC § 3797(w)(2) (Supp. 2010). The purpose of the legislation is “to break the cycle of criminal recidivism, increase public safety, and help States, local units of government, and Indian Tribes, better address the growing population of criminal offenders who return to their communities and commit new crimes . . . .” Id.