



SR1001

LRB103 40424 ECR 72740 r

1 SENATE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, America was founded on the promise of new
3 beginnings; and

4 WHEREAS, Every year, more than 650,000 people are released
5 from State and Federal prisons, some leaving with nothing more
6 than a few dollars and a bus ticket to start their new lives;
7 in total, over 70 million Americans have a criminal history
8 record, potentially making it hard for them to secure a steady
9 job, safe housing, affordable health care, a good education,
10 or small business loans, all of which are important things to
11 have when trying to build a good life; studies demonstrate
12 that when these needs are met, not only are formerly
13 incarcerated people empowered but crime is prevented and our
14 communities are safer; and

15 WHEREAS, That is why, last year, the Biden Administration
16 released a comprehensive strategic plan to improve the
17 criminal justice system and strengthen public safety,
18 including over 100 concrete actions that the Administration is
19 taking to boost public safety by improving rehabilitation in
20 jails and prisons, helping people rebuild their lives, and
21 reducing unnecessary interactions with the criminal justice
22 system so police officers can focus on fighting crime; and

1 WHEREAS, The Biden Administration has also invested nearly
2 \$1 billion in job training, addiction recovery, and reentry
3 services across the country and has expanded access to Pell
4 Grants so people can earn a college degree while they are
5 incarcerated and can start over with new skills; the
6 Administration is also helping formerly incarcerated people
7 find good-paying jobs on projects to rebuild America funded by
8 the historic infrastructure law and by expanding opportunities
9 to serve in the Federal Government; and

10 WHEREAS, At the same time, the Biden Administration has
11 taken historic steps to end America's failed approach to
12 marijuana; incarceration for marijuana possession alone has
13 destroyed too many lives, particularly for Black and Brown
14 Americans who have been arrested, prosecuted, and convicted at
15 higher rates than other racial and ethnic groups; in 2022,
16 President Biden asked the Secretary of Health and Human
17 Services Xavier Becerra and Attorney General Merrick Garland
18 to start formally reviewing how marijuana is scheduled under
19 Federal law; he has issued categorical pardons for people
20 convicted for simple marijuana possession and use under
21 Federal and D.C. law while urging governors to do the same on
22 the State level; it is unethical for a person to be in jail or
23 prison for using or possessing marijuana alone; and

24 WHEREAS, Meanwhile, the Biden Administration has made

1 historic investments to expand access to mental health and
2 substance use services; and

3 WHEREAS, The Biden Administration has also provided \$400
4 million to prevent juvenile justice involvement and to make
5 these systems more responsive to the needs of youth and over \$3
6 billion in funding for education programs that provide
7 support, services, and interventions to keep students
8 positively engaged in their schools and communities; and

9 WHEREAS, By working together to improve the criminal
10 justice system, our communities will be safer, stronger, and
11 more just; these efforts will make families and communities
12 whole and help grow our economy, giving everyone a fair
13 chance; therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL
15 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we declare April of
16 2024 as Second Chance Month in the State of Illinois as it is
17 imperative to recommit to building a criminal justice system
18 that lives up to the ideals of new beginnings so that people
19 returning to their communities from jail or prison have a fair
20 shot at the American Dream.