



Senate & House lawmakers release updated First Step Act

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WASHINGTON – A bipartisan, bicameral group of lawmakers today released revised text of the *First Step Act* to continue building support for criminal justice reform. This update was brokered by the White House and a bipartisan group of lawmakers in both chambers of Congress. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Speaker Paul Ryan have pledged to take up the revised package before the end of the year.

Last month, U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-IA), and Senators Mike Lee (R-UT), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) introduced the [First Step Act](#), which combines prison reform proposals that overwhelmingly passed in the House of Representatives earlier this year with sentencing reform provisions from the broadly bipartisan [Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act](#), which was authored by Durbin and Grassley and passed the Senate Judiciary Committee in February by a vote of 16-5.

“The bipartisan First Step Act is a once in a political lifetime aligning of the stars. Republicans, Democrats, President Trump, Fraternal Order of Police, and ACLU have all thrown their support behind our bill. This bipartisan compromise could be one of the most important things we do when it comes to criminal justice not only this year but for a long time. I commend my colleagues for their spirit of cooperation on this important piece of legislation and I look forward to getting this job done in the closing weeks of this session,” Sen. Durbin said.

“Over the last several years, we’ve expanded support for comprehensive criminal justice reform by listening to stakeholders and lawmakers to strike a balance that reduces crime and recidivism, and the associated taxpayer burden, while ensuring that dangerous and career criminals face steep consequences for their actions. Today’s update represents the latest in our effort to achieve this goal. I appreciate the engagement from many of my colleagues to fine tune the most significant criminal justice reform in a generation, and I

applaud President Trump and the White House for bringing everyone to the table to make this happen. Following these changes and the growing demonstration of support for this bill, Leader McConnell is keeping his word by pledging to hold a vote this year,” Sen. Grassley said.

“After listening to many of our colleagues, this updated First Step Act addresses each of the concerns we’ve heard from stakeholders across the country. It is solid common-sense reform that will make our families stronger and our communities safer and I look forward to debating it on the Senate floor,” Sen. Lee said.

“Our broken criminal justice system is a cancer on the soul of our nation that’s disproportionately preyed upon low-income Americans, the addicted, and people of color. This bill is a meaningful step in the right direction that will help correct the ills of the failed War on Drugs. It will have a profound effect on thousands of families suffering under the burden of our broken system,” Sen. Booker said.

“This bill does two important things: lowers the recidivism rate and reduces sentences for nonviolent offenders which allows us to direct resources towards truly dangerous criminals. For a nonviolent offender to be released early, the offender has to acquire a necessary skill-set to be more productive once released. The bill also gives more latitude to judges to make sure lengthy sentences are not mandated for multiple nonviolent offenses. This has produced a great burden on the system and has taken a lot of people out of the workforce that could be productive. Finally, I very much appreciate Jared Kushner’s tenacity when it comes to making sure the criminal justice reform legislation becomes law. I also appreciate President Trump’s bold and energetic leadership on this issue. It was also an honor working side by side with Senator Tim Scott on another important reform. Senator McConnell’s announcement that the Senate will take up criminal justice reform was music to my ears. Now, let’s pass it into law,” said Sen. Graham.

“We know the reforms in this bill can yield real improvement in our criminal justice system because they’ve worked in states like Rhode Island and Texas. Now, we are poised to pass those reforms into law across the federal system. I am proud of the bipartisan work that has led us to this moment, and grateful to all the people – law enforcement, civil rights groups, former inmates, state and local officials, community leaders, and so many more – who helped us get here,” Sen. Whitehouse said.

“During my chairmanship of the House Judiciary Committee, I have made reform of our federal criminal justice system a top priority. It is clear that reforms are necessary to protect Americans from crime, to help ensure that offenders become productive members of society after they serve their time, and to adjust some sentences that are currently excessive. I am extremely pleased that we have reached a bipartisan, bicameral

agreement on legislation to accomplish these goals, and I urge immediate consideration of this legislation so that we can send it to President Trump to sign into law,” Rep. Goodlatte said.

“I am pleased to join with my colleagues in introducing the First Step Act, an important bill that will advance criminal justice reform. This bill includes critical changes to our sentencing laws that will reduce the impact of some mandatory minimum sentences, notably with retroactive application of the reduced crack cocaine sentences under the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010. The bill’s reauthorization of the Second Chance Act is also a measure that is long overdue. We will continue to work in Congress to oversee the implementation of these reforms as well as the new system to allow some federal prisoners to earn early entry into pre-release custody. There is still more work to be done to ensure our criminal justice system is equally fair and just for every American; however, this bill is its namesake: a positive first step,” Rep. Nadler said.

“Seventeen months ago, the People’s House partnered with the White House to improve public safety by lowering recidivism and prioritizing evidence-based rehabilitation, and we’ve continued moving forward with the Senate since the House passed this bill 360-59 last May. Lawmakers across both chambers and both parties agree that the time to act is now, and we agree on what that action looks like. Today, I stand with my colleagues in the House and Senate as we take strides that move the First Step Act closer to the president’s desk,” Rep. Collins said.

“The First Step Act is a historic piece of legislation that strikes a forceful blow against the mass incarceration epidemic in America. This bill will meaningfully reform our broken criminal justice system, enact fairer sentencing laws, reduce recidivism and save taxpayer dollars. It is a significant step toward redemption for thousands of non-violent drug offenders harshly treated by unjust crack-cocaine laws. The FIRST STEP Act represents the beginning of the end of over-criminalization in America,” Rep. Jeffries said.

The revised legislation further clarifies eligibility for earned time credits following successful completion of evidence-based recidivism reduction programs, and expands on the existing list of disqualifying offenses. The changes address points raised by some law enforcement groups and provides for additional transparency in the Bureau of Prisons’ risk assessment framework. A summary of the update can be found [here](#). Text is available [here](#).

The *First Step Act* is endorsed by President Trump and [cosponsored](#) by more than a third of the Senate, evenly balanced among Democrats and Republicans.

Here’s a complete list of current Senate cosponsors:

1. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa)
2. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.)
3. Mike Lee (R-Utah)
4. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.)
5. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.)
6. Cory Booker (D-N.J.)
7. Tim Scott (R-S.C.)
8. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.)
9. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa)
10. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.)
11. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.)
12. Chris Coons (D-Del.)
13. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.)
14. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.)
15. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.)
16. Doug Jones (D-Ala.)
17. Susan Collins (R-Maine)
18. Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.)
19. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.)
20. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.)
21. Rand Paul (R-Ky.)
22. Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii)
23. Rob Portman (R-Ohio)
24. Angus King (I-Maine)
25. Todd Young (R-Ind.)
26. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii)
27. Bill Cassidy (R-La.)
28. Ben Cardin (D-Md.)
29. Steve Daines (R-Mont.)
30. Tina Smith (D-Minn.)
31. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.)
32. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.)
33. Ted Cruz (R-Texas)
34. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.)

The *First Step Act* is backed by a number of law enforcement groups, including the [nation's largest police group](#). It's also [supported by 172 former federal prosecutors](#) including two former Republican U.S. attorneys general, two former deputy attorneys general and a former director of the FBI along with [sheriffs from 34 states](#) across the country. The National Governor's Association, which represents the governors of all 50

states, [praised the bill](#). A broad coalition of conservative and progressive groups along with a host of business leaders and faith-based organizations also support the *First Step Act*.

More information on the revised *First Step Act*

- [Text of revised *First Step Act*](#)
- [Summary of revised *First Step Act*](#)
- [Summary of *First Step Act* as introduced](#)
- [Current cosponsors and endorsements](#)