



THE
AMERICAN
CONSERVATIVE
UNION
FOUNDATION



March 15, 2018

The Honorable Phil Bryant
Governor
State of Mississippi
P.O. Box 139
Jackson, MS 39205

The Honorable Philip Gunn
Speaker
Mississippi House of Representatives
P. O. Box 1018, Room 306
Jackson, MS 39215

The Honorable Tate Reeves
Lieutenant Governor
State of Mississippi
PO Box 1018
Jackson, MS 39215

The Honorable Terry Burton
President Pro Tem
Mississippi State Senate
P.O. Box 1018, Room 307
Jackson, MS 39215

Via Electronic Delivery

Dear Governor Bryant, Lt. Governor Reeves, Speaker Gunn and President Burton:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we applaud your progress in safely reducing incarceration in Mississippi. Three years since 2014 criminal justice reform, crime is down and so is the prison population. You lead an admirable group of states guided by data-driven sentencing and corrections policies that ensure more citizens are punished proportionally in a system that is more restorative, and upon release, can become productive members of the workforce. We applaud your efforts to build upon that 2014 foundation this session by advancing policies that further reduce recidivism, improve reentry, and incentivize individuals involved in the justice system to change their behavior.

Prior to implementation of the 2013 recommendations of the Corrections and Criminal Justice Task Force, Mississippi had one of the nation's fastest-growing prison populations in the nation. Without immediate action, the state projected that the incarcerated population would grow by 1,951 inmates at a cost of \$266 million over 10 years. However, Mississippi chose to reform the status quo, and now more than three years after the passage of House Bill 585, it is clear the reforms have worked:

- The property crime rate in the Magnolia State decreased by five percent, while violent crime remained stable and at an historic low.
- Mississippi averted the projected prison growth and decreased the prison population by 10 percent.
- More state resources are now focused on violent offenders.
- Fewer people on probation and parole are committing new crimes.

We believe that the ultimate result of criminal justice reform should be improving the safety of our neighborhoods and communities. Texas, South Carolina, Georgia and other states have shown this can be accomplished by aligning our corrections systems with the conservative principles that reduce crime and prioritize the family. Mississippi has made significant strides over the past three years; however, the state has the third highest imprisonment rate in the nation. While efforts this session to pass meaningful evidence-based reform will continue to drive trends in a positive direction for public safety, success will depend on continued reforms year after year. We applaud your vision, values, and effort, and are grateful for your work.

Please reach out if there is any support we may provide now or in the future.

Respectfully,



David Safavian, Esq.
Deputy Director
American Conservative Union Foundation
Center for Criminal Justice Reform



Grover Norquist
President
Americans for Tax Reform



Arthur Rizer
Director of Justice and National Security Policy
R Street Institute



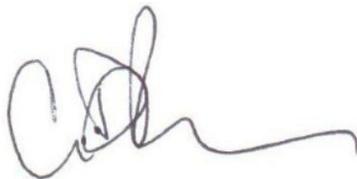
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Acting President
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