

FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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December 14, 2018

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley,

As the National President of the 26,000 members of the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA), I am writing to you regarding the First Step Act. FLEOA's endorsement of the First Step Act is contingent upon inclusion of the Cotton-Kennedy amendment to the legislation.

Since its introduction, FLEOA has been in discussions with members of your staff, members of the White House staff, Department of Justice executives, and the law enforcement community. FLEOA finally believes that we can support and endorse the latest version of the First Step Act.

Throughout this process, FLEOA has steadfastly withheld our support of this bill because of numerous concerns. Each new iteration of the bill addressed some of our concerns. For example, many of our members are Probation Officers and the release and transfer of prisoners to the community would create an unprecedented burden on already overtasked probation officers. After several discussions, this was addressed.

Subsequently, FLEOA expressed our concerns that many sex offenders, illegal immigrants, and criminals who assaulted Federal Agents would not be excluded from early release programs. Discussions with your staff resulted in changes to the Act that will resolve many of these issues.

FLEOA continues to believe that additional amendments protecting victims and law enforcement officers, as well as increasing the exclusions of additional criminals would make this legislation even better. Throughout this process FLEOA has also suggested adding the Probation Officer Protection Act to First Step. As you know, this bill which was passed by the House, provides Probation Officers with arrest authority when they are threatened in the performance of their duty. The anticipated early release of thousands of prisoners will expose these officers to unforeseen and dangerous situations. This arrest authority would be a tool to control potential altercations.

In closing, I would like to commend Aaron Cummings and Rich DiZinno of your staff for their inclusion of FLEOA in the discussions that resulted in the positive changes that were made to this historic legislation.

Sincerely,

Nathan R. Catura

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National President
Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association