

RESTORE THE RULE OF LAW

The rule of law serves as a foundational pillar of our republic. For a civil society to exist, citizens must believe that our laws will be fairly applied and equally enforced. To uphold the rule of law, society must maintain a social contract between American communities and law enforcement. Citizens must respect the law, and law enforcement officers must act fairly and, when necessary, hold offenders accountable. A nation that has lost respect for the rule of law is subject to chaos.

In 2017, President Trump signed an executive order to establish the Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety. This action was taken to combat illegal immigration, drug trafficking, and violent crime throughout our country. He also established the Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice in late 2019, which reinforced his administration's commitment to the rule of law.

Even after these strong actions, our Nation still has much work to do to restore the rule of law. Lawmakers in many parts of the Nation must go further to ensure the law is enforced. Rising crime rates and diminished support for law enforcement officers have contributed to a deterioration of our legal system and a lack of respect for the idea of enforcing laws fairly and consistently.

Sadly, many of our country's largest cities responded negatively to the Trump Administration's efforts to promote the administration of justice. Some local lawmakers vehemently resisted cooperating with these initiatives, even as violent criminals and gangs worked to jeopardize the safety of their own neighborhoods and their own law enforcement officers.

Some state and local officials also expressed a willingness to lessen punishment for crimes or look the other way as wrongdoing occurred. At the same time,

their public lack of confidence in their own police officers contributed to growing unrest throughout major cities. Violent crimes and murder rates have since skyrocketed, demonstrating the consequences of downplaying the importance of law and justice.

To solve these problems and maintain the important social contract between communities and law enforcement, we must restore the rule of law. Doing so requires a concerted effort to stop the decriminalization of crimes at the state and federal level and a willingness to aggressively enforce the laws on the books. Americans deserve to live in safe communities where the rule of law is promoted and respected.

THE FACTS

- ★ 12 major U.S. cities broke annual homicide rates in 2021.
- ★ In New York City, shootings increased by 104% from 2019 to 2021, car thefts rose by 91%, and murders climbed 52%.
- ★ 6 major cities (Baltimore, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Atlanta, and New York City) are all on pace to break their 2021 levels of violent crime halfway through 2022.
- ★ After previously cutting the Portland Police Bureau's budget by \$16 million, Mayor Ted Wheeler was forced to add millions back to the police budget and offer a
- ★ \$25,000 signing bonus to recruit new officers amid a rising crime wave.

THE AMERICA FIRST AGENDA

At the federal level, support policies that:

- ★ Stop the decriminalization movement.
- ★ Prioritize aggressive enforcement of existing criminal laws and strict interpretation of those laws.

- ★ Declare Antifa a domestic terrorist organization because its goal is to destroy our constitutional government through violence.
- ★ Carry out a nationwide crackdown on theft and violent crime through strong penalties and strong prosecution.
- ★ Protect the victims of crime through victim's assistance programs, such as local domestic violence shelters, child advocacy centers, rape crisis centers, homicide support groups, and elder abuse programs at the state and federal level.
- ★ Adopt an "original meaning" interpretation of the Constitution.

At the state level, support policies that:

- ★ Stop the decriminalization movement
- ★ Prioritize aggressive enforcement of existing criminal laws and strict interpretation of those laws.

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PROMOTE RESPECT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

Police officers, along with the military, small businesses, and the church, have always been highly respected institutions in the U.S. A poll from February of this year shows that 80% of Americans see police officers as “good people doing a difficult job.” The public’s positive sentiment towards police officers has stayed strong despite a public messaging campaign that promoted disrespect toward the police and popularized the mantra, “Defund the Police.” Most of our citizens respect their law enforcement officers and always have — so too should their government.

When our Nation’s police officers—and the institution of law enforcement itself—are not respected, crime naturally ensues. But when the public respects our police officers and the important work they do to protect our communities, our Nation is stronger and more secure.

Policing that is safe and effective both for police officers and their communities relies on mutual respect. Without this, assailants are more likely to use aggression when dealing with police officers, putting their own lives and the lives of officers at risk.

Heightened tensions between the police and the communities they serve have happened before. Throughout U.S. history, popular perceptions of the police have ebbed and flowed following high-profile incidents such as the 1993 Rodney King case in Los Angeles or the 2014 attack on Officer Darren Wilson that led to the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. The sensationalized news stories that resulted from these incidents enflamed communities and led to policies that slashed police budgets, hampering their ability to adequately perform their duties.

Law enforcement officials must be equipped with the proper tools to successfully investigate and bring to justice the violent criminals plaguing society. Americans

understand that freedom can only exist when they feel that their everyday lives will not be interrupted by threats of violence and lawlessness. Sadly, this assurance of security does not exist in many communities today.

The mainstream media has been quick to characterize as incidents of “police brutality” events where the facts on the ground prove otherwise. In many cases, the fallout from this irresponsible coverage has been months of devastating riots, arson, and mass looting.

We must increase penalties for assaulting police officers, incentivize police retention and recruitment, resist federalizing law enforcement through consent decrees and other civil oversight, support rural law enforcement, and stand with law enforcement officers so they can effectively do their jobs.

THE FACTS

- ★ 12 major cities broke annual homicide rates in 2021.
- ★ Washington, D.C., cut \$15 million from the budget for its police department in 2020.
- ★ Washington, D.C., experienced a 15% increase in homicides from 2020 to 2021.
- ★ Ambush attacks on police increased by 115% in 2021.
- ★ 67% of United States adults want the police presence in their communities to stay the same.
- ★ 20% of Black Americans and 24% of Hispanic Americans want a greater police presence in their communities.

THE AMERICA FIRST AGENDA

At the federal level, support policies that:

- ★ Oppose federal consent decrees that are aimed at taking accountability away from elected officials and limiting the flexibility of state and local law enforcement.

At the state level, support policies that:

- ★ Prioritize community outreach and develop “strong and positive” relationships between community members and their police departments.
- ★ Launch education and transparency initiatives regarding police policies, particularly regarding the use of force.
- ★ Support enhanced penalties for assaults on law enforcement officers, especially assaults on officers when they are performing their duties.
- ★ Support increases in pay for law enforcement officers.
- ★ Prioritize access to training and career advancement opportunities.
- ★ Prioritize supplemental funding for small and rural law enforcement agencies that are often under-resourced.

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STOP CHINESE COMMUNIST MALIGN INFLUENCE AND THEFT OF AMERICAN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The greatest threat to American economic security is the People's Republic of China (PRC), and more specifically, the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The PRC regularly exploits U.S. immigration policies and our open business and academic environments to steal hundreds of billions of dollars in American intellectual property (IP) each year. The PRC also employs nefarious practices to foster anti-American and pro-communist sentiment within the public discourse.

The PRC's methods include its extensive use of counterintelligence, espionage, disinformation campaigns, and cybertheft. These malign practices seek to bolster the PRC's commitment to economic and military dominance through the systematic theft of intellectual property. Other nefarious actions include the acquisition of state secrets through coercion, blackmail, or bribery.

The Department of Justice reports that 80% of economic espionage cases, including trade secret theft and hacking, involve communist China. The PRC carries out its intelligence gathering through corporate infiltration and talent recruitment. The Thousand Talents Program aims to entice Americans to sell their knowledge and innovative practices to China in direct violation of export controls and conflict of interest rules.

But this threat is not confined to industry alone. It also extends into the academic field. Confucius Institutes, launched globally in 2004 and scattered across universities within the U.S., have been a cause for concern since their inception. Ostensibly created to promote Chinese culture and language, Confucius Institutes are controversial in the U.S. due to

allegations that they suppress academic freedom at American universities, are controlled by the CCP, and disseminate Chinese propaganda.

The previous administration took steps to curb foreign influence in American institutions through a strategic plan that countered the PRC's abuses of our free economy and society. This approach prohibited PRC nationals with connections to the CCP from applying for student visas for national security-sensitive graduate programs. It also halted imports of products made with slave labor and spotlighted CCP efforts to undermine the 2018 midterm elections. America First efforts like these are needed to counter the PRC's malign influence and theft of American intellectual property.

THE FACTS

- ★ Chinese theft of American IP currently costs between \$225 billion and \$600 billion annually.
- ★ 75 Confucius Institutes are operating in the U.S., including 65 on college campuses.
- ★ 500 Confucius Classrooms are on K-12 campuses throughout the U.S.
- ★ The FBI has arrested dozens of individuals accused of spying on behalf of the PRC while on American soil.
- ★ These include individuals who worked within the intelligence community and sensitive industries affecting U.S. national and economic security interests.

THE AMERICA FIRST AGENDA

At the federal level, support policies that:

- ★ Limit and regulate foreign donations and

endowments from foreign governments or foreign nationals to both state universities and local school systems.

- ★ Prohibit Confucius Institute access to or involvement with any level of state or local school curricula, staffing, or other operations.
- ★ Enhance scrutiny of aliens from countries with adversarial governments who attend American universities.

- ★ Prohibit IP transfers to Chinese entities, and enact and enforce strict punishments for violators.
- ★ Eliminate the majority People's Republic of China (PRC)-owned corporations or companies from state-controlled pension funds.
- ★ Prohibit the use of PRC-manufactured drones by state and local law enforcement.

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ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES THAT ARE PLAGUING OUR STREETS

An increasing number of individuals and communities are struggling with homelessness in America today. Approximately 580,000 homeless individuals are scattered across the Nation, according to a Department of Housing and Urban Development 2020 survey. Four in 10 of these individuals are currently in unsheltered locations on the street or in other uninhabitable areas.

Substance abuse and mental illness play a major role in this issue. Fifty percent of unsheltered homeless individuals report that mental health conditions contributed to loss of housing, and 51% report that substance abuse conditions contributed to their situation. Furthermore, at least 3 in 4 unsheltered homeless individuals self-reported mental health or substance abuse conditions, with the majority reporting both.

The rising number of mentally ill and substance-abusing individuals pose a danger to themselves and others, and this situation must be addressed. All around the country, the data show that neighborhoods next to street camps have higher levels of rape, armed robbery, and aggravated assault than those that are not. Additionally, diseases such as typhus and Hepatitis A have spread through homeless encampments in California.

Once vibrant cities such as San Francisco have allowed drug paraphernalia, human excrement, homeless encampments, and tent cities to proliferate in the name of “compassion,” hurting the local economy and lowering the quality of life for law-abiding taxpayers. For these reasons, approximately 8 in 10 voters in the city want their legislators to ban street camping.

Solving problems associated with mental health and homelessness requires appropriate and flexible treatment options for severe mental illness. Medicaid has excluded federal payments to institutions of mental disease (IMD) for care provided to most Medicaid-eligible adults since 1965, which has limited access to care for low-income patients with severe mental illness. In 2018, the Trump Administration sought to address this issue through CMS-issued guidance that allowed states to apply for Section 1115 waivers to pay for some short-term treatment in IMDs for serious mental illness. It also issued guidance allowing waivers to cover short-term treatment for substance use disorders in 2017.

Addressing the root causes of homelessness must be prioritized by policymakers through the alignment of funds and resources. The Left has long advocated for a “Housing First” approach that provides homeless individuals with housing without addressing the underlying problems that cause homelessness. Evidence has shown that this approach is ineffective.

An America First solution requires addressing the mental health and substance abuse crises contributing to the homelessness crisis, empowering law enforcement to act in defense of their communities and public spaces, and deregulating local housing markets. Allowing homelessness to grow unabated is not the “compassionate” solution for the homeless themselves nor for the broader public. Instead, the problems of this vulnerable population must be addressed so they can be empowered to live as productive American citizens in clean, safe communities.

THE FACTS

- ★ Unsheltered homelessness increased by more than 50,000 individuals during the last 5 years.
- ★ Sheltered homelessness has decreased each year since 2014.
- ★ 60% of crimes in Los Angeles involving homeless individuals are violent, while just 32% of all crimes in the city are violent.
- ★ 4 people die in Los Angeles's homeless camps every single day.
- ★ At least 3 in 4 unsheltered homeless individuals self-report mental health and substance abuse conditions.
- ★ Approximately 8 in 10 voters want their legislators to ban street camping.

Instead, address the underlying causes of homelessness first and then empower individuals to succeed on their own.

- ★ Address overregulated local housing markets.
- ★ Challenge the 9th Circuit's ruling in *Martin v. Boise*, which held that cities could not enforce anti-camping ordinances if they do not have enough homeless shelter beds available for their homeless populations.

THE AMERICA FIRST AGENDA

At the federal level, support policies that:

- ★ Combat drug addiction and the opioid epidemic by ending the flow of drugs into the country from our open borders, creating harsher punishments for drug trafficking, and increasing treatment availability.
- ★ Allow modifications of the IMD exclusion in Medicaid based on evidence from Section 1115 waivers for short-term treatment for severe mental illness or substance abuse disorders.
- ★ Empower states and communities with the flexibility and resources needed to develop treatment programs for homeless individuals.

At the state level, support policies that:

- ★ Apply for Section 1115 waivers for modifications of the IMD exclusion in Medicaid for short-term treatment for severe mental illness or substance abuse disorders.
- ★ Empower local police to enforce all public order laws.
- ★ Abandon the failed "Housing First" philosophy.

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UNRAVEL ORGANIZED CRIME, HUMAN TRAFFICKING RINGS, AND DRUG TRADE WITHIN OUR CITIES

Every American child should be able to grow up without falling victim to violence, drugs, or other crimes that can destroy their future. Public officials are responsible for doing everything in their power to make this possible and keep our neighborhoods safe. Unfortunately, traffickers pose grave threats to the safety of communities and to the well-being of children, teenagers, and families. Criminal street gangs and drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) are engaged in all types of criminal activity, including murder, assault, robbery, extortion, and most notably, trafficking of both humans and drugs. Through force, fraud, coercion, and sexual exploitation of minors, traffickers splinter families, destroy lives through drug addiction, and threaten the safety of our communities.

Sadly, the Biden Administration has failed to address these problems and take strong action that would protect American communities. To combat organized crime, our government must secure the southern border to shut down the pipeline of illicit narcotics moving into our country. Additionally, the government should enact sanctions and tariffs on suppliers of fentanyl and empower law enforcement with the resources they need to fight illicit drug trafficking. The previous administration enacted federal policies that provided more resources and authority to law enforcement, but our government is now taking a different, unsuccessful approach.

To break the pernicious cycle of illicit drugs pouring into our communities, gang violence, and crime, our Nation needs comprehensive solutions that focus on prevention, intervention, and suppression. In 2020, the Department of Justice carried out Operation LeGend — a sustained and coordinated law

enforcement surge in communities across the Nation. Additionally, in 2018, a record amount of funding was granted for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program, which enhanced efforts to interdict drug trafficking organizations to stop the flow of illegal narcotics into American communities.

Prosecutors at all levels must be encouraged and empowered to aggressively prosecute gang members, drug traffickers, and human traffickers by enforcing zero tolerance policies at all levels. These include aggressively prosecuting drug dealers who intentionally sell opioids, including deadly fentanyl, intending to create addiction in their customers. Without aggressive enforcement, the destructive groups will continue to spread, allowing them to become more sophisticated and better organized.

Trafficking, gang activities, and other forms of organized crime are threats to any society dedicated to freedom, individual rights, and the rule of law. For the safety of all Americans, we must address them to protect our communities and maintain law and order.

THE FACTS

- ★ Annual drug overdoses in the U.S. exceeded 100,000 in 2021 for the first time ever, making drug overdoses the leading cause of death for young Americans.
- ★ CBP seized more than 5,000 kilograms of fentanyl in 2020; one kilogram of fentanyl is equivalent to 500,000 lethal doses.
- ★ Enough fentanyl was caught crossing our border in 2021 to kill 2.54 billion people.
- ★ Approximately 28,100 gangs are active across the U.S. with activity in all 50 states.

- ★ More than 50% of schools with more than 1,000 students reported gang activities.
- ★ Gang violence accounts for 13% of all homicides and nearly half of all violent crimes.
- ★ Gangs are responsible for facilitating approximately 85% of all sex trafficking in some areas of the country.

THE AMERICA FIRST AGENDA

At the federal level, support policies that:

- ★ Fully fund Department of Homeland Security efforts to secure the border, stop illegal immigration, and hold drug smugglers accountable.
- ★ Increase funding and support for High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area operations.
- ★ Enact zero tolerance policies to address gang violence and drug trafficking operations.
- ★ Fund community-based diversion and prevention programs to protect America's youth from exposure to gangs or illicit narcotics.
- ★ Enhance criminal penalties for convicted gang members and traffickers.

At the state level, support policies that:

- ★ Enact zero tolerance policies to address gang violence and drug trafficking operations.
- ★ Fund community-based diversion and prevention programs to protect America's youth from exposure to gangs or illicit narcotics.
- ★ Enhance criminal penalties for convicted gang members and traffickers.

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STRENGTHEN FATHERHOOD AND THE NUCLEAR FAMILY

America leads the world in fatherlessness, with approximately one out of every four children growing up without a father in the home. Fatherlessness often leads to serious problems, including children who are far more likely to run away from home, drop out of school, or end up homeless. Unfortunately, decades of political mismanagement and misaligned incentive structures within our welfare system have exacerbated the problem of fractured families.

Means-tested welfare programs, such as housing and food assistance, undermine their anti-poverty rationale when they sharply cut benefits off as household income increases. Policies like these discourage fathers from returning to the home and penalize all families for taking actions to move up the economic ladder. With government programs acting as a destabilizing force for families, out-of-wedlock births have skyrocketed from five percent in 1960 to more than 40% today. To address this crisis, we must first raise awareness about the issue of fatherless children and then work to find new solutions.

Of course, there is no “one size fits all” solution to the fatherlessness crisis in America today. Solving this problem will require policies that promote lasting marriages and responsible fatherhood by strengthening the nuclear family, empowering churches, and increasing programming and support for incarcerated and formally incarcerated individuals.

Eliminating benefit cliffs and reducing tax penalties on secondary earners can help stabilize lower-income working families by encouraging two-parent households and active labor market participation. Government officials can also support an all-out pro-fatherhood messaging campaign to amplify the importance of fatherhood across the Nation.

Americans overwhelmingly believe that parents bear the primary responsibility of raising children. When this is not possible or is not taking place, local communities are well-positioned to take care of fatherless children.

Local churches and faith-based organizations are well-prepared to lead on this issue, as they have the resources needed to guide fathers to their highest potential. At the federal level, removal of the Johnson Amendment, which restricts tax-exempt churches from engaging in political speech, would greatly empower churches to speak forcefully on new policies. At the same time, tax breaks for mentorship programs, civic service and engagement opportunities, and family resource programs can help equip fathers and families for success.

The federal government cannot reinvigorate fatherhood on its own. But it can and must stop getting in the way of families who are looking to rebuild from brokenness. The America First vision centers on reforming harmful policies that undermine the stability of the two-parent family and empowering private organizations that are the most directly invested in the success of their local communities. With the federal government as a partner for restoration instead of an instigator of decline, fatherhood will once again be celebrated in America as a core component of strong families who make up the foundation of our Nation.

THE FACTS

- ★ 23% of American children are raised in a one-parent household.
- ★ Without a father in the home, children are five times more likely to live in poverty than a child in a married-couple family.

- ★ 90% of all homeless and runaway children come from fatherless homes.
- ★ 63% of teens who commit suicide and 85% of children and teens with behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes.
- ★ 71% of all adolescent patients in drug and alcohol treatment centers come from fatherless homes.
- ★ Children without fathers at home are 9 times more likely to drop out of high school.

employable skillsets to be successful upon their reentry into society, and bring fathers back to their families and communities.

- ★ Support the use of mediation in cases of divorce or transition from prison or military to co-parenting.
- ★ Support funds for non-custodial parents to get the help and support they need to successfully co-parent.
- ★ Promote policies that remove barriers to adoption.

THE AMERICA FIRST AGENDA

At the federal level, support policies that:

- ★ Reverse the cultural crisis by empowering churches and community organizations by providing legal protections for political speech.
- ★ Eliminate benefit cliffs and reduce steep tax penalties on secondary earners that discourage two-parent working households.
- ★ Enhance programs that have successfully reduced recidivism, better equip men with tangible and employable skillsets to be successful upon their reentry into society, and bring fathers back to their families and communities.
- ★ Support parenting education for incarcerated parents to learn to parent and promote a “Continuum of Care” model for fathers as they return to their community and families.
- ★ Permit the use of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to support non-custodial or incarcerated parents to get programing such as education, job assistance, and mental health and substance abuse treatment.

At the state level, support policies that:

- ★ Update income verification to determine appropriate and accurate rates of child support.
- ★ Encourage community organizations and churches to provide support for non-custodial parents who are actively paying child support and in good standing to spend time with their children.
- ★ Remove tax and benefit disincentives to two-parent working families.
- ★ Enhance programs that have successfully reduced recidivism, better equip men with tangible and

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CREATE A PATHWAY TO A SECOND CHANCE

One out of every 100 American adults, or close to 2.3 million people, are currently incarcerated. Approximately 90% of those incarcerated will eventually be released from prison, yet within three years of release, more than 40% will return to prison. In some states, recidivism rates are even higher, reaching closer to 60%. This system has proven to be a burden not only on law enforcement but on society as a whole.

Reducing recidivism can be achieved, but this goal will require taking a “whole of community” approach. This approach calls for working with key partners in the faith-based and nonprofit communities, law enforcement, and local employers to equip former nonviolent inmates with the tools they need to succeed in society. The faith-based community is uniquely poised to help in reentry efforts due to its resources, know-how, and on-the-ground manpower to provide access to employment and construct stable support systems for formerly incarcerated individuals.

By providing strong community mentorship, counsel, and assistance to the formerly incarcerated, the faith-based sector can help these individuals get back on their feet and reintegrate themselves into civil society. Additionally, it is important to highlight the many stakeholders in faith-based and nonprofit organizations who use their expertise to contribute to reentry efforts on a daily basis.

Recidivism can also be addressed through the promotion of “Good Time Credits” for nonviolent offenders who voluntarily choose to participate in rehabilitation programs. These programs aim to prepare inmates for life after incarceration and incentivize good behavior and habits that will serve them well in society. Merit-based rehabilitation programs reward those who actively take steps towards rehabilitating themselves

through preparation for post-incarceration life, such as educational attainment, good behavior, and skills training.

The construction of stable support systems is also critical to any efforts surrounding criminal justice reform. This can be accomplished by connecting nonviolent, formerly incarcerated individuals to stable housing, employment opportunities, and programming for training and licensing. Additionally, by addressing transportation barriers to employment, or reestablishing family relationships to rebuild their lives, our Nation can decrease the number of people returning to prison while also helping confront rising crime rates.

We cannot afford to simply release these individuals back into society without proper preparation, tools, or support systems for what comes next. We must change the paradigm of how society views prisons. It is our duty to address the core problems and issues that inmates are facing, and then care for and support them appropriately until they are truly rehabilitated.

THE FACTS

- ★ Federal prisons are at 60% overcapacity.
- ★ 2 million people are currently in our Nation’s prisons and jails—a 500% increase during the last 40 years.
- ★ 90% of people going to prison in America will eventually be leaving.
- ★ Approximately three out of four people remain unemployed a year after being released.
- ★ Approximately 70 million U.S. adults have criminal records.

THE AMERICA FIRST AGENDA

At the federal level, support policies that:

- ★ Reform means-testing criteria in government assistance programs to not penalize two-parent homes, such as those without housing assistance and food stamp programs, thereby encouraging more stable family environments.
- ★ Prioritize mechanisms for reentry to society that include a focus on rehabilitation efforts prior to parole.
- ★ Facilitate pathways to a second chance, such as reducing barriers and disincentives to occupational training and licensing, and engage the private and nonprofit sectors in expanding access to halfway homes, transportation, and employment, and supporting reentry programming.
- ★ Highlight the successful faith-based and nonprofit stakeholders in prison reentry efforts around the country.

At the state level, support policies that:

- ★ Create merit-based rehabilitation programs for nonviolent offenders within our government-funded prisons that provide educational and workforce parole credits at the state level.
- ★ Prioritize mechanisms for reentry to society that include a focus on rehabilitation efforts prior to parole.
- ★ Encourage additional tax incentives for those providing pathways to a second chance. These pathways include occupational training and licensing, halfway homes, transportation, employment, and reentry programs.
- ★ Highlight the successful faith-based and nonprofit stakeholders in prison reentry efforts around the country.

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