

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 2nd Session of the 57th Legislature (2020)

3 HOUSE CONCURRENT
4 RESOLUTION 1016

By: West (Tammy) and Mize of
the House

5 and

6 Shaw of the Senate

7
8 AS INTRODUCED

9 A Concurrent Resolution designating the month of
10 April as Second Chance Month in Oklahoma; and
directing distribution.

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13 WHEREAS, every person is endowed with human dignity and value;

14 WHEREAS, redemption and second chances are American values;

15 WHEREAS, an estimated seventy million American citizens have a
16 criminal record;

17 WHEREAS, the United States Department of Justice reports that
18 over six hundred thousand individuals returned to their communities
19 from state and federal prisons in 2017;

20 WHEREAS, those who have paid their debt after committing a crime
21 face significant barriers, also known as collateral consequences, to
22 reintegrating into society;

1 WHEREAS, the Council of State Governments reports that the
2 number of legal collateral consequences of a criminal conviction
3 exceeds forty-four thousand;

4 WHEREAS, youth face more than one thousand collateral
5 consequences that affect their high school education and college
6 education;

7 WHEREAS, many of these collateral consequences are mandatory
8 without taking into account the seriousness of the offense, the time
9 passed since the offense, the efforts made by the individual to make
10 amends and earn back the trust of the public, or whether the
11 collateral consequences have a proven public safety benefit;

12 WHEREAS, gaining meaningful employment is one of the most
13 significant predictors of successful reentry and reducing future
14 criminal activity;

15 WHEREAS, ninety percent (90%) of those who have previously been
16 incarcerated struggle to find employment because of societal and
17 legal barriers which are often not directly related to the offense
18 committed or to any proven public safety benefit;

19 WHEREAS, every jurisdiction has laws which prohibit individuals
20 with a criminal record from working in certain industries such as
21 cosmetology, operating arcade games, automotive parts recycling,
22 camping equipment sales, boiler inspections, and many others;

23 WHEREAS, over sixty percent (60%) of employers report they would
24 not be willing to hire someone with any criminal record and many

1 employers utilize a blanket no-hire policy for individuals with a
2 criminal record;

3 WHEREAS, education has also been shown to be a significant
4 predictor of successful reentry;

5 WHEREAS, those with a criminal record have lower levels of
6 educational attainment than the general population and have
7 significant difficulty acquiring admission to and funding for
8 educational programs;

9 WHEREAS, individuals convicted of certain crimes are barred from
10 receiving the financial aid necessary to acquire additional skills
11 and knowledge;

12 WHEREAS, many individuals, regardless of their efforts to live
13 positively, are denied admission to institutions of higher education
14 on account of their criminal record despite a lack of empirical
15 evidence showing a risk to campus safety;

16 WHEREAS, individuals with a criminal history also face
17 significant barriers in securing a place to live;

18 WHEREAS, fifty-six percent (56%) of landlords are unwilling to
19 rent to an individual with a criminal record containing a felony
20 charge and thirty-two percent (32%) are unwilling to rent to an
21 individual with a previous misdemeanor conviction;

22 WHEREAS, individuals with a criminal history are also barred
23 from seeking access to public housing or receiving public housing
24 assistance;

1 WHEREAS, this inability to access housing has been found to
2 increase the number of individuals returning to prison;

3 WHEREAS, many people with a criminal history face other
4 significant challenges such as an inability to regain voting rights,
5 volunteer in their communities and secure identification
6 documentation. They also face significant debt as a result of their
7 conviction and incarceration;

8 WHEREAS, all of these barriers prevent seventy million
9 (70,000,000) Americans with criminal records from contributing fully
10 to their families and communities;

11 WHEREAS, these barriers can contribute to recidivism, which
12 increases victimization and decreases public safety;

13 WHEREAS, the inability to find gainful employment and other
14 collateral consequences of conviction inhibit the economic mobility
15 of people with a criminal history, which negatively impacts the
16 well-being of their children and families for generations;

17 WHEREAS, the legal barriers and stigma associated with a
18 criminal record results in lost human capital and lost economic
19 output for the United States;

20 WHEREAS, the anniversary of the Second Chance Act of 2007, which
21 has provided reentry services to over one hundred sixty-four
22 thousand people in forty-nine states and the District of Columbia
23 since its passage, falls on the 9th day of April;

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1 WHEREAS, the anniversary of the death of Charles Colson, who
2 used his second chance after being incarcerated for a Watergate-
3 related crime to establish Prison Fellowship, the largest outreach
4 program for prisoners and their families in the nation, fell on
5 April 21, 2012;

6 WHEREAS, a robust coalition of businesses, congregations and
7 other organizations across the country have celebrated "Second
8 Chance Month" since April of 2017 through public events, Second
9 Chance 5k running events, briefings, social media campaigns,
10 advocacy, press and other activities; and

11 WHEREAS, designating the month of April as "Second Chance Month"
12 can contribute to increased public awareness about the challenges
13 faced by those who have paid their debt to society and opportunities
14 for individuals, employers, congregations and communities to extend
15 second chances.

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
17 OF THE 2ND SESSION OF THE 57TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE, THE SENATE
18 CONCURRING THEREIN:

19 THAT the month of April 2020 shall be designated as "Second
20 Chance Month" in Oklahoma.

21 THAT the Oklahoma House of Representatives and Oklahoma State
22 Senate honor the work of communities, governmental institutions,
23 nonprofit agencies, congregations, employers and individuals to
24 remove unnecessary legal and societal barriers that prevent

1 individuals with a criminal record from becoming productive members
2 of society.

3 THAT the Oklahoma House of Representatives and Oklahoma State
4 Senate call upon the people of Oklahoma to observe "Second Chance
5 Month" through actions and programs that promote awareness of the
6 challenges facing those who have paid their debt to society.

7 THAT copies of this Resolution be sent to Donald J. Trump,
8 President of the United States; Mike Pence, Vice President of the
9 United States; William Barr, United States Attorney General; Kevin
10 Stitt, Governor of Oklahoma; Matt Pinnell, Lieutenant Governor of
11 Oklahoma; Scott Crow, Director of the Oklahoma Department of
12 Corrections; and to each member of Oklahoma's Congressional
13 Delegation.

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15 57-2-10988 GRS 02/19/20

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