



City of Chicago



R2015-856

Office of the City Clerk

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Meeting Date: 10/28/2015

Sponsor(s): Burke (14)
Austin (34)
Reboyras (30)

Type: Resolution

Title: Call for U.S. House of Representatives, Senators Richard Durbin and Mark Kirk to facilitate passage of criminal justice reform legislation

Committee(s) Assignment: Joint Committee; Finance; Public Safety

*Sentencing
Public Safety
(Joint)*

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The United States incarcerates 25% of the world's prisoners, with an incarceration rate four times higher than China, and greater than the top 35 European countries combined; and

WHEREAS, To address rising crime rates in the late 1970's and early 1980's, Congress and state legislatures began approving harsher criminal penalties and sentencing guidelines; and

WHEREAS, As a result, the United States prison population has quadrupled since 1980 though there has not been a corresponding drop in crime rates; and

WHEREAS, Prolonged incarceration of nonviolent offenders, who make up roughly half of all inmates, frequently contributes to the disintegration of families, increases dependency on state aid, and reduces the economic viability of individuals, families and communities; and

WHEREAS, Reducing incarceration will also improve public safety because people who need treatment for drug, alcohol, and mental health issues will be more likely to improve and reintegrate into society if they receive consistent care, something relatively few jails or prisons offer; and

WHEREAS, Many people serving disproportionately long sentences for nonviolent offenses are routinely housed with hardened offenders; and

WHEREAS, In July, President Obama became the first sitting president to visit a federal prison, later outlining the moral and economic case for shrinking the prison population, rehabilitating inmates instead of merely locking them up, and the impact of policing and criminal prosecution on poor communities; and

WHEREAS, 130 of our Nation's most highly regarded police chiefs, prosecutors, and sheriffs have formed a group to address the topic of reducing our nation's incarceration rate for nonviolent criminals; and

WHEREAS, The Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime and Incarceration is working with courts, Congress, and state legislatures to roll back tough laws and rigid judicial practices that have built a criminal justice system with one of the highest incarceration rates in the world and costs \$80 billion a year to maintain;

WHEREAS, In response to law enforcement's pressure, The Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2015 is now pending before the U.S. Senate; and

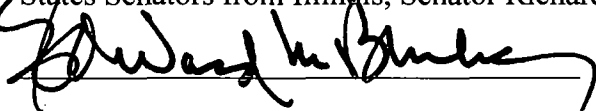
WHEREAS, This bipartisan legislation would reduce the prison sentences for some nonviolent drug offenders; now therefore

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BE IT RESOLVED, That we the Mayor and the members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, do hereby urge the Chicago delegation of the United States House of Representatives, as well as the United States Senators from Illinois, Senator Richard J. Durbin and Senator Mark Kirk, to facilitate the swift passage of criminal justice reform legislation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to the Chicago delegation of the United States House of Representatives, as well as to the United States Senators from Illinois, Senator Richard J. Durbin and Senator Mark Kirk.



Alderman Edward M. Burke, 14th

Carie M. Austin 34

