



For Immediate Release

1/31/2019

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Reform Groups Applaud “Florida First Step Act”

Tallahassee, Fla.— A coalition of national and Florida-based organizations today applauded Senator Jeff Brandes (R, St. Petersburg) for filing the “Florida First Step Act.” Americans for Prosperity - Florida, Right on Crime, FAMM, the James Madison Institute, the American Conservative Union Foundation, the Faith & Freedom Coalition, Americans for Tax Reform, and FreedomWorks praised the move as an effort to improve Florida’s criminal justice system.

Senator Brandes said the bill will help fix a prison system in crisis. “The criminal justice system takes too much from taxpayers and doesn’t give them as much safety as they deserve,” Brandes said. “The Florida First Step Act will create a more efficient, effective criminal justice system,” he said. Brandes’s colleague, Senator Joe Gruters, said he will co-sponsor the bill. Gruters, who was recently elected chair of the state Republican Party, said, “Thanks to President Trump’s leadership on the federal First Step Act, families are safer, taxpayers are saving money, and people are getting second chances. Now, we have an opportunity to do the same for Florida. I’m happy to lend my support to this good bill.”

Chelsea Murphy, Florida director for Right on Crime, said Floridians are ready for reform. “Poll after poll shows Florida voters are ready to get smart on crime. We’d get better public safety if we reserve prison for people we’re afraid of,” she said. Murphy also noted a recent report by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) that found Florida could save tens of millions of dollars annually and reduce recidivism by diverting low-risk offenders from prison.

“The Florida First Step Act would be Florida’s boldest criminal justice reform in 25 years,” said Greg Newburn, FAMM’s state policy director.

Skylar Zander, Florida director for Americans for Prosperity- Florida, said, “Nearly every person who walks into a state prison will one day walk out. The Florida First Step Act will help ensure they’re better prepared to get a job and stay on the straight and narrow. That’s a win for public safety and for taxpayers. AFP-FL thanks Senator Brandes for his leadership.”

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