



December 10, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

I write to share the National Retail Federation's (NRF) support for S. 3649, the First Step Act. This bipartisan legislation would make critical reforms to our nation's criminal justice system, and NRF urges the Senate to move forward without delay.

NRF is the world's largest retail trade association, representing discount and department stores, home goods and specialty stores, Main Street merchants, grocers, wholesalers, chain restaurants and Internet retailers from the United States and more than 45 countries. Retail is the nation's largest private sector employer, supporting one in four U.S. jobs – 42 million working Americans. Contributing \$2.6 trillion to annual GDP, retail is a daily barometer for the nation's economy.

The First Step Act's emphasis on recidivism reduction programs and incentivizing inmate participation in these programs will help prepare incarcerated individuals for successful reentry into our communities and employment opportunities. With more than 860,000 open retail jobs and seven million open jobs across all industries in September 2018, increasing access to valuable training and education offerings will provide inmates with the skills needed to compete in today's labor market and secure gainful employment upon release. Workforce development remains a top priority for NRF, and the reforms made by the First Step Act are consistent with our focus on and investments in training programs, including the NRF Foundation's RISE Up credentials.

NRF urges Congress to seize the remaining window of opportunity in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress to proceed to a vote on S. 3649 and believes these significant reforms will support successful transitions back into society and expand our nation's skilled workforce,

Sincerely,

David French  
Senior Vice President  
Government Relations