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Executive Director  
Hagerstown, Maryland

December 11, 2018

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte  
Chairman  
House Committee on the Judiciary  
2138 Rayburn House Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on the Judiciary  
2036 Rayburn House Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Grassley  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
152 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Members of Congress:

On behalf of the American Jail Association (AJA), the national voice of professionals who work in and operate the more than 3,500 local jails throughout the US, we write in strong support of the First Step Act. We are thrilled that such an important piece of legislation is now within sight of the finish line and seems certain to pass.

Every individual that goes to prison must first go through a local correctional institution. Our members are on the front lines of the criminal justice system and experience daily its current challenges. Through the years-long process of bringing this legislation forward, the AJA has consistently supported comprehensive criminal justice reform that addresses both sentencing and recidivism-reduction measures. The fact that the First Step Act will contain provisions that address both sides of criminal justice is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the sponsors of this bill and their many cosponsors.

The solutions promoted in the bill serve not only those who are incarcerated, but also their families and the community more broadly. It is important that during their time in the system, they are provided with the tools and training necessary for them to successfully re-enter society and the workforce. We do a disservice to the fabric and vibrancy of local communities when individuals are incarcerated for unnecessarily long periods of time and are not provided with valuable skills and training for their re-entry to the community. Too often, these individuals wind up once again going through our facilities.

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As an integral member of the national law enforcement community, the AJA will continue to support common sense improvements to the criminal justice system. It is our hope that those who pay their debt to society and successfully contribute in their communities afterward are given the tools necessary to reach that goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronaldo D. Myers". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Ronaldo D. Myers  
President  
American Jail Association  
Director, Richland County (SC) Detention Center

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert J. Kasabian". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent "R" and "K".

Robert J. Kasabian  
Executive Director  
American Jail Association