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ACR-219 Second Chances Month. (2017-2018)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 219

CHAPTER 107

Relative to Second Chances Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State June 26, 2018.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 219, Jones-Sawyer. Second Chances Month.

This measure would designate June 2018 as Second Chances Month in California, highlighting existing services and events to support reentry.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, Mass incarceration and failed criminal justice policies have emphasized incarceration over rehabilitation and prevention for years, resulting in as many as one in four Californians having a criminal record; and

WHEREAS, After completing a jail or prison sentence and prescribed supervision requirements by the court, individuals face difficulties in successfully returning to their communities. Known as second prison, individuals who have served their time are treated as second-class citizens, barred from housing, employment, and the democratic process; and

WHEREAS, Reducing barriers contributes to public safety by reducing recidivism, increasing the economic well-being of entire communities, and allowing individuals the opportunity to seek a better life for themselves and their families and contribute to society in a positive and meaningful way; and

WHEREAS, Nationally, 80 percent of employers perform criminal background checks on prospective employees. However, some agencies that perform background checks report inaccurate information, causing employers to be less likely to hire system-impacted individuals. Sixty percent of formerly incarcerated individuals are unemployed a year after their release. Those who do find jobs are paid 40 percent less than those without criminal records; and

WHEREAS, California's criminal justice reform efforts are moving from a system focused on punishment, exclusion, economic barriers, and lifetime bans to a system focused on prevention, rehabilitation, upward mobility, reintegration, and economic stability. The reform efforts recognize that these changes create economic and other opportunities for system-impacted individuals; and

WHEREAS, In 2014, California voters passed Proposition 47 at the November 4, 2014, statewide general election, which reduced certain low-level, nonviolent offenses to misdemeanors, and Assembly Bill 1115 of the 2017–18 Regular Session and Assembly Bill 651 of the 2013–14 Regular Session created a process for an individual to remove felony convictions from his or her criminal record. Many system-impacted individuals are still not aware of this opportunity; and

WHEREAS, California continues to encourage enhanced collaboration between counties and law enforcement agencies, including district attorneys, public defenders, probation departments, and trial judges. The state recognizes that a system for identifying eligible Proposition 47 applicants is essential to enhancing the link between record correction and employment opportunities, creating an accurate and efficient background check process, and increasing access to mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, health services, supportive housing, and support services for the formerly incarcerated; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature acknowledges and commends the following organization for its efforts in supporting our system-impacted community: Californians for Safety and Justice; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature designates June 2018 as Second Chances Month in California, highlighting existing services and events to support reentry, such as access to free RAP sheets, employment support, fair chance hiring, and the Summer of Second Chances to be held during the summer of 2018; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.