

2023-K546

Assembly Resolution No. 546

BY: M. of A. Anderson

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 2023, as Second Chance Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Second Chance Month

WHEREAS, Every person is endowed with human dignity and value; and

WHEREAS, Redemption and second chances are American values; and

WHEREAS, An estimated 70 million American citizens have criminal records which creates significant barriers to employment, economic stability, and successful reentry into society; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Justice reports that every year, approximately 640,000 individuals returned to their communities from state and federal prisons, including approximately 20,000 from the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Second Chance Month is an opportunity to reaffirm the importance of helping people who were formerly incarcerated reenter society, address both the root causes of crime, and the underlying needs of returning citizens using resources devoted to prevention, diversion, reentry, trauma-informed care, culturally-specific services, and social support; and

WHEREAS, Often times, individuals who have paid their debts after committing crimes face barriers to reintegrating into society; and

WHEREAS, Many of the barriers do not account for the seriousness of the offense, the time passed since the offense, the individual's efforts to make amends and earn back the public's trust, or whether the barrier has a proven public safety benefit; and

WHEREAS, Ninety percent of those who have previously been incarcerated struggle to find employment because of both societal and legal barriers; and

WHEREAS, Education has also been shown to be a significant predictor of successful reentry; and

WHEREAS, Those with criminal records generally have lower levels of educational attainment than the general population and have significant difficulty acquiring admission to, and funding for, educational programs; and

WHEREAS, Barriers may prevent the 70 million Americans with criminal records from contributing fully to their families and communities; and

WHEREAS, The 16th Anniversary of the Second Chance Act of 2007, which has provided reentry services to over hundreds of thousands of people in 49 states and the District of Columbia since its passage, falls on April 9, 2023; and

WHEREAS, The designation of April as Second Chance Month can contribute to increased public awareness about the challenges faced by those who have paid their debts, and opportunities for individuals, employers, congregations, and communities to extend second chances: now,

therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 2023, as Second Chance Month in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause further to honor the work of communities, governmental institutions, non-profits, congregations, employers, and individuals to remove unnecessary legal and societal barriers that prevent individuals with criminal records from becoming productive members of society; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause further to call upon the people of the State of New York to observe Second Chance Month through actions and programs which promote awareness of the challenges facing those who have paid their debts and opportunities to unlock second chances; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York.