

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5070

To provide access to Federal public benefits for individuals with criminal convictions, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 13, 2019

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ (for herself, Ms. MENG, Mr. CLAY, Ms. TLAIB, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, and Ms. LEE of California) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Reform

A BILL

To provide access to Federal public benefits for individuals with criminal convictions, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “A Just Society: The
5 Mercy In Re-entry Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FEDERAL PUBLIC BENEFIT ACCESSIBILITY FOR IN-**
7 **DIVIDUALS WITH CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provi-
9 sion of law, an individual may not be denied any Federal
10 public benefit solely on the basis that the individual was

1 convicted of a criminal offense (whether under Federal,
2 State, tribal, or foreign law).

3 (b) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this section, the
4 term “Federal public benefit” means—

5 (1) any grant, contract, loan, professional li-
6 cense, or commercial license provided by an agency
7 of the United States or by appropriated funds of the
8 United States; and

9 (2) any retirement, welfare, health, disability,
10 public or assisted housing, postsecondary education,
11 food assistance, unemployment benefit, or any other
12 similar benefit for which payments or assistance are
13 provided to an individual, household, or family eligi-
14 bility unit by an agency of the United States or by
15 appropriated funds of the United States.

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