RECORD EXPUNGEMENT DESIGNED TO ENHANCE EMPLOYMENT (REDEEM) ACT

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, earlier this month, Senator RAND PAUL and I introduced the Record Expungement Designed to Enhance Employment—or REDEEM—Act, a bill that takes important new steps to ensure that youth and adults caught up in the criminal justice system have an opportunity at a second chance to turn their lives around rather than returning to a life of crime. I thank Senator PAUL for joining with me to craft this legislation.

This important bipartisan legislation would establish much needed, sensible, pragmatic reforms that keep kids out of an adult system in the first place, protect their privacy so a youthful mistake does not haunt young people throughout their lives, and make it less likely that low-level nonviolent offenders reoffend.

As the former mayor of Newark, I believe strongly in holding people accountable for breaking our laws, but I also believe it is important that we do everything possible to ensure that when people leave prison and return to their communities, they have every chance at becoming productive members of our society. No one deserves more of an opportunity to leave their past behind than our children. Far too often, kids are easily manipulated into making a youthful mistake that should not follow them for the rest of their lives. That is why I advocate that we fix our Nation's broken criminal justice system, a system that has taken an unimaginable and I believe unsustainable toll on families and communities.

The United States is home to between 4 and 5 percent of the entire globe's population, but we have 25 percent of the world's prison population. This phenomenon is unacceptable, that the land of the free would have 25 percent of the globe's imprisoned people. What is startling about that is the majority of those people are nonviolent offenders. In fact, the majority are nonviolent drug offenders.

This phenomenon has largely emerged since around 1980, a period during which the Federal prison population has grown nearly tenfold. Since 1980 we have seen a 10-time increase in our prison population. The sad reality is that nearly three-quarters of Federal prisoners are nonviolent and have no history of violence whatsoever.

What is worse and what is anguishing is that once they are convicted of a crime, American citizens then face daunting obstacles to successfully rejoin society, to being able to raise their family, put food on the table, provide for themselves. As a result of that, our State and Federal prison exits have now become revolving doors, with two of every three ex-offenders getting rearrested within 5 years. Two-thirds of those nonviolent folks leaving our prisons come back within 5 years.

When ex-offenders return to prison again and again, they are not just paying a price; we all pay the price. We are contributing so much of our resources to rearresting the same people over and over, to reincarcerating the same people over and over. A recent Pew report concluded that if just 10 States cut their recidivism just 10 percent, taxpayers would save $470 million—money this Nation could use to either return to taxpayers or invest in our crumbling infrastructure.

To further public safety, reduce recidivism, and protect the future of our children, I am proud to reintroduce the REDEEM Act. This bill would incentivize States to raise the age of original jurisdiction for criminal courts to 18 years old. Trying juveniles who have committed low-level, nonviolent crimes as adults is counterproductive. They do not emerge from prison reformed and ready to reintegrate into a high school. The criminal record they have will not help them as they try to get a job. We need a system that treats juveniles toughly and fairly, with an eye toward a productive adulthood.

This change in law is important for protecting our children's futures. For kids in the dozen States that treat 17- and even 16-year-olds as adults, no longer would getting into a schoolyard scuffle result in an adult record that could follow an individual for the rest of their life, restrict access to a college degree, limit employment prospects, and increase the likelihood of engaging in further criminal activity.

The bill would enhance Federal juvenile record confidentiality and provide for automatic expungement of records for kids who commit nonviolent crimes before they turn 15 and automatic sealing of records for those who commit nonviolent crimes after they turn 15.

The bill would ban the very cruel and counterproductive practice of juvenile solitary confinement that can have immediate and long-term detrimental effects on youth detainee mental and physical health. In fact, the majority of suicides by juveniles in prisons occur when young people are placed in solitary confinement. Other nations even consider it torture.

The bill would, for adults, offer the first broad-based Federal path to the sealing of criminal records. A person who commits a nonviolent crime will be able to petition a court and make his or her case.

The bill would enhance the accuracy of criminal justice records. Employers requesting a background check from the Federal Bureau of Investigation will be provided with only relevant and accurate information thanks to a provision that will protect job applicants by improving the quality of the Bureau's background check. Think about this: 17 million background checks were done by the FBI in 2013, many of them for private providers, and upward of half of them were inaccurate or incomplete, often causing people to lose a job, miss an economic opportunity, and be trapped with few economic options other than to reoffend in order to feed a child.

Finally, the bill would lift a ban on receiving Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program, or SNAP, benefits. The intent of this program is to keep low-income families from going hungry. Yet those convicted of drug use or possession lose the right to obtain such benefits. Once an individual has paid his or her debt to society, a path to the reinstatement of those benefits should be available. As President George W. Bush said in his 2004 State of the Union Address, ''America is the land of the second chance, and when the gates of the prison open, the path ahead should lead to a better life.'' This bill would do just that.

Taken together, these measures will help keep kids who get in trouble out of a lifetime of crime and help adults who commit nonviolent crimes become more self-reliant and less likely to reoffend. This bill is supported by 27 organizations, including: the ACLU, the National Employment Law Center, the Sentencing Project, the Center for Children Law and Policy, the Legal Action Center, the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, the General Board of Church and Society, National Juvenile Justice Network, and the National Catholic Social Justice Lobby.

The time to act is now. We cannot afford to let our criminal justice system continue to grow at the rate that it is. We cannot afford to sap billions of taxpayer dollars from a broken system that is locking people up and then doing nothing to empower them to succeed. We cannot afford to waste human potential and human productivity.

We have seen how other individual States—like Georgia, Texas, and North Carolina—are taking significant steps to address this issue and are lowering both recidivism and the size of their prison population, while at the same time lowering actual crime in their States. It is time that the Federal Government act to do the same.

I urge my fellow Senators to support the REDEEM Act so we can make our communities safer and stronger and empowers our citizens to live productive and strong lives of contribution.

WORLD WAR II VETERANS VISIT

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the distinguished veterans of Honor Flight Northern Colorado who recently made their 13th trip to Washington, DC to visit the memorials that stand in our Nation's Capital. This group includes veterans from multiple wars and different generations, linked together by their service to our Nation.

Founded in 2005, the Honor Flight Program was originally formed to honor veterans of World War II but has since expanded to include those who have served in all other American engagements. This program provides an

opportunity for veterans to fly to Washington, DC free of cost, so they can visit the national memorials dedicated to their service. Of the 123 veterans who visited Washington, DC 22 served in World War II, 69 in Korea, and 32 in Vietnam.

Military service is an exceptional duty to country. When the United States has been threatened, our veterans have stepped up and answered our country's call without reservation or fear.

Though these memorials honor our veterans' service, no statue or monument can truly express the level of gratitude we feel for those who courageously risked their lives to preserve our inherent rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Today we honor those who fought to secure the blessings endowed by our Creator for future generations.

Please join me in honoring Leonard Bennett, Verne Berry, Donald Debus, Frank DeSeure, Earl Harper, Joe Hoberman, Boyd Johnson, Charles Johnson, Phyllis Iverson-Farver, Glenn Lawrence, William Loper, Thomas Mascarenas, Jack Miller, James Mitchell, Glenn Morrell, Robert Palmer, Margaret Rowlett, Waldemar Schielke, Eric Schoenhaar, Lyle Stearley, Perry Sullinger, James Wayne, Henry Amen, Donald Babcock. William Berg, JD Bernard, Norton Billings, James Boltz, Leslie Bridwell, John Brunner, Francis Carrigan, Arne Christensen, Kenneth Cook, Edna Coseo, Lowell Davis, George Dillan, Edward Doebbeling, James Doherty, Paul Duneman, Philip Edwards, Karl Ehmann, Frank Faiella, Robert Fiscus, William Franklin, Melvin Gerling, Douglas Gifford, Otis Gordley, Jr., John Hefton, Robert Heldt, Richard Hirn, William Hotes, Bert Jones, Jr., Robert Kearney, Wayne Kluck, Richard Krebs, Vito LaBarbara, Richard Larson, Donald LeFever, Richard Lewis, John Marks, William Marlatt, Dale Mason, Verle Miller, Howard Morgan, Norman Oling, Donald Packard, Burdett Parsons, Harold Potter, Rolland Reinick, Louis Richardson, Dudley Rider, Clyde Rink, Jr., Richard Ruggles, Richard Schilling, Raymond Schropfer, Wilbert Shimoda, Raymond Slauson, Charles Stevens, Jimmy Stickley, John Stitzel, Robert Stitzel, Thomas Stults, Eugene Stumpf, Dorral Threlkel, Jerry Turner, Ray Walker, Linus Wasinger, Ernest Wimmer, Delmar Wittier, Wallace Wolverton, Charles Wyant, Edward Andrews, Dennis Arnold, Berton Bessey, Ralph Bowling, Eugene Burmeister, Martin Carrera, Ronald Carrera, Thomas Claspell, Randy Colby, Kenneth Curry, Kenneth Eck, Timothy Feia, Sylvia Fiscus, Larry Giauque, Roger Hess, Warren Hindman, David Jones, Wallace Lavery, Michael Linder, William Lodge, Merle Luther, James Maxwell, Gaylen Miller, Martin Musick, Edward Obrecht, Jr. Daniel Scalise, Ronald Schaft, Gary Stricklin, John Stricklin, Robert Van Driel, David Webb, John Zochol.

90TH ANNIVERSARY OF WHP 580 TALK RADIO

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, today I recognize WHP 580 Talk Radio, a radio station in Harrisburg, PA, celebrating its 90th anniversary on April 3, 2015.

WHP 580 was established as WHBG in 1925 by the Skane Electrical Service. The station was sold in 1927 and changed its name to WHP on station dial 1280 AM 2 years later. In 1951, WHP was moved to dial number 580 AM, where it has remained ever since.

WHP 580 continues the tradition of providing quality programming and news just as it did 90 years ago. WHP 580 provides listeners with insightful talk radio aimed at informing citizens in Pennsylvania about current and national affairs, while keeping them engaged in local issues. The station offers a variety of talk radio programming, local and regional news updates, and daily weather and traffic reports for commuters. By broadcasting pertinent, up-to-date information, WHP 580 continues its legacy as a respected news source in the Central Pennsylvania region.

I recognize the significant contributions that WHP 580 Talk Radio has made to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I wish them all the best as they continue their efforts to lead by example with a vision for better broadcasting in central Pennsylvania.

GREATER BLOOMINGTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I congratulate the hard-working members of the Greater Bloomington chamber of Commerce as they celebrate 100 years of creating jobs, building Indiana's economy, and improving the lives of Hoosiers across our State.

The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1915 by a group of local business leaders dedicated to improving their community. For the past century, the chamber has proudly served Bloomington and Monroe County businesses, as well as the community as a whole, with integrity, leadership, and collaboration.

Since its founding, the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce has provided leadership through member engagement, business advocacy, and civic partnerships designed to strengthen the Bloomington business environment. They have been a voice of business in greater Bloomington, advancing collaboration, regional partnerships, and fostering young professional development in order to prepare students for work.

The Bloomington Chamber of Commerce has many noteworthy accomplishments over their 100 years of existence. Some of these include leading support for local and statewide transportation improvement projects; supporting the development of public water resources such as Lakes Lemon, Griffey, and Monroe; leading school bond referendums, programs, and opportunities through the Franklin Initiative; and supporting efforts to revitalize downtown Bloomington. For these efforts and so many more, the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce has been named Chamber of the Year in both Indiana and on the national level by the American Chamber of Commerce Executives.

Businesses and everyday residents have benefited from the efforts of the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce, and its members to create an exceptional quality of life for families in and around Monroe County. As a leading advocate for business in the Bloomington area today, the chamber's mission remains true to its foundation while at the same time adapting to accommodate the ever-changing landscape of today's business world. Their core vision of keeping Greater Bloomington a vibrant community in which to live, learn, invest, and work has paid off for area residents and will continue to do so for years to come.

On behalf of the citizens of Indiana, I sincerely congratulate all members of the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce on their 100th anniversary, and I wish them continued success and growth in the years ahead.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO ZEKE GRADER

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing William F. ''Zeke'' Grader, Jr., who is being honored by the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations and the Institute for Fisheries Resources in recognition of his extraordinary contributions to the fishing community.

Zeke's roots to fishing date back to his childhood. He was raised in Fort Bragg, a small coastal town in Mendocino County, and spent his free time down on the docks helping his family's fish business. Zeke later attended Sonoma State University and graduated with a degree in political science before going to law school at the University of San Francisco.

In 1976, Zeke began working as the executive director of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, PCFFA, a trade organization supporting commercial fishing and fishermen rights. Throughout his 40-year career with PCFFA, Zeke worked tirelessly to support fishermen and their families, serving with unmatched distinction and skill. Zeke always understood the importance of ocean conservation, supporting groundbreaking legislation such as the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the California Coastal Act and advocating for sustainable fisheries that protected against overfishing and restored fish habitats.

Zeke's passion for the ocean led him to other leadership positions, including