



FIRST STEP AT FIVE: FIRST STEP ACT BY THE NUMBERS

Congress passed the landmark First Step Act with bipartisan support, and President Donald Trump signed the law on December 21, 2018. Now, almost five years later, it is clear that this important criminal justice reform legislation is an overwhelming success. Passage of the First Step Act has not led to increased crime. The law fixed some of the most excessive and unfair sentencing practices, increased rehabilitative programming and incentives in prisons, and reunited thousands of families.

- 29,946** Total number of people released from federal prison to return to their families
- 12.4%** Recidivism rate of those released (vs. 43% for the general federal prison system)
- 4,226** People receiving fairer crack cocaine sentences
- 7,000** People placed in prisons closer to home so they can maintain the family ties that will help them succeed after prison
- 4,502** People released for “extraordinary and compelling circumstances,” including terminal illness, under compassionate release
 - 2775 of these people were released during the Pandemic because of their vulnerability to COVID-19
- \$75 million** **per year** through Fiscal Year 2023 – investment in more rehabilitative programming in federal prisons
- 35%** **increase** in participation in rehabilitative programming and productive activities in prisons
- 15** New rehabilitative programs created in the federal prison system
- 30,000** Federal prison employees who have received de-escalation training to make prisons safer for everyone.

The First Step Act’s reforms have made the federal justice system fairer without endangering public safety. Congress should consider expanding on these reforms in the future.