



July 17, 2019

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Chairman
Committee on Small Business
& Entrepreneurship
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Benjamin Cardin
Ranking Member
Committee on Small Business
& Entrepreneurship
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Rubio and Ranking Member Cardin,

The Pinellas Ex Offender Re Entry Coalition (PERC), is one of the oldest multiple partner reentry organizations in the Southeastern United States, and certainly in Florida. Our mission is to ensure that all formerly incarcerated individuals living in the Tampa Bay area have access to the services they need to successfully rebuild their lives after paying their debt to society. Our organization strives to provide the most comprehensive services as possible by providing education, housing, workforce development, and job placement for ex-offenders. We also provide case management in our six offices over two counties.

PERC believes that the successful re-entry of recently released prisoners is great public policy. Often, offenders have difficulty finding work and becoming self-sustaining immediately after completing their sentence. One component of successful re-entry can be business education courses. Many ex-offenders have worked in or acquired skilled trades also may also have an entrepreneurial mindset. These people simply need assistance in turning their idea in to reality. Finding work is one of the biggest obstacles that formerly incarcerated individuals face, starting a business can be a good way for these individuals to become self-sufficient.

Our organization is pleased to see that the Senate has given attention to re-entry issues in the current Small Business Administration reauthorization process. We fully support Chairman Rubio's inclusion of Ranking Member Cardin's NEW Start pilot program in the Chairman's mark. We believe that this pilot program will help more returning citizens to provide for themselves and be successful members of their community. We applaud the Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship's bipartisanship and are excited by the prospect of a program that will complement existing services provided by our organization and many like ours around the country.

Sincerely,

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