



Association of Women Executives
in Corrections
Email: info@awec.us
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November 27, 2017

Senator Kamala Harris
Senator Rand Paul

Re: Pretrial Integrity and Safety Act of 2017

Dear Senators:

This letter is written to show support for your introduced legislation of the Pretrial Integrity and Safety Act. The Association of Women Executives in Corrections (AWEC) has a membership of 250 executive women leaders in the corrections field and supports pretrial reform as outlined in this legislation.

Far too many justice-involved individuals remain in jails pre-adjudicated solely because they cannot afford the money bond placed on them. Likewise, public safety is put at risk when violent and high-risk offenders are released on money bond without supervision. For the past 20-30 years the pretrial population has grown at a significant pace, and now makes up about 61% of jail populations and costs about \$9 billion a year to incarcerate. In the current system, which often requires a financial bond from a commercial bond agency, economic status becomes a significant factor in determining who is released pending trial, rather than such factors as risk of flight or threat to public safety. In short, for the poor, bail means jail.

We encourage Congress to move aggressively to pass this important legislation, and we join the support of expansion of pretrial reform. Many jurisdictions throughout the United States are placing a renewed focus on pretrial services because of new research which supports an evidenced-based approach to assist in determining release conditions which are consistent with the laws and constitution. Release decisions should be made on best practices for making release decisions that protect the public, but do not keep people in jail solely for the inability to pay a money bail.

As President of the Association of Women Executives in Corrections, I give you this organization's full support for passage of this legislation and join other criminal justice professionals and organizations in this effort.

Sincerely,

Shirley Moore Smeal
President

Association of Women Executives in Corrections

C: AWEC Executive Board
AWEC Board of Directors
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