

Legislation Text

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Urging Congress to adopt S. 573, also known as the National Criminal Justice Commission Act, which proposes to establish a national commission for criminal justice reform.

WHEREAS, A bipartisan group of U.S. Senators joined together on March 8th, 2017 to introduce the National Criminal Justice Commission Act of 2017. If enacted, this bill would create a national commission aimed at studying the criminal justice system on the local, state, and national levels as well as offering recommendations for reforms; and

WHEREAS, The proposed commission is modeled on the 1965 Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of justice created by President Lyndon B. Johnson. That commission produced more than 200 recommendations, many of which have had an enduring impact, including recommendations for the creation of the 911 emergency system and the Bureau of Justice Statistics; and

WHEREAS, A local reform commission, the Council Special Committee on Criminal Justice Reform, is already operating here in the City of Philadelphia. Under the leadership of Councilman Curtis Jones, Jr., the Special Committee has already produced meaningful recommendations for the reform of the City's criminal justice system. The Committee's interim report, "A Shift from Re-Entry to Pre-Entry," is evidence of the meaningful work that can be accomplished through a dedicated commission aimed at examining and recommending reforms; and

WHEREAS, The National Criminal Justice Commission Act has already received the endorsement of several law enforcement groups as well as civil right activists. The Fraternal Order of Police and the International Association of Police Chiefs have joined with the Urban League, NAACP, and the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights to advocate on behalf of the bill; and

WHEREAS, Reform of our nation's criminal justice system is important not only for increasing public safety, but also for improving the well-being in some of the country's most vulnerable populations. People of color and low-income individuals are more likely to have an encounter with the criminal justice system. Reforms that ensure equal justice for all who go through that system are crucial for addressing those racial and economic disparities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Council hereby urges Congress to adopt S. 573, also known as the National Criminal Justice Commission Act, which proposes to establish a national commission for criminal justice reform.