



LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS

To Reduce Crime & Incarceration

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 12, 2019

Media Inquiry Contact: Sunwoo Oh, sunwoo.oh@lawenforcementleaders.org, (646) 925-8703
Experts available for comment

Law Enforcement: Higher Education Is Crucial To Reduce Recidivism

Police and Prosecutor Group Urges Congress to Lift Ban on Pell Grant Eligibility in Prisons

Washington, D.C. – As part of its continued commitment to promote sensible criminal justice reform and reduce recidivism after the passage of First Step Act, [Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime & Incarceration](#) today issued an open letter to Congress in support of restoring Pell grant funding to persons who are incarcerated.

“Reducing recidivism is key to public safety, and in-prison education is key to reducing recidivism. As law enforcement leaders with decades of collective experience, we support giving incarcerated individuals a chance to advance their education despite challenges earlier in life. In addition, reinstating federal Pell grant eligibility for incarcerated individuals presents an opportunity for continued bipartisan success in criminal justice reform following the passage of the First Step Act. Given that we know that higher education in prisons is one of the most effective ways to combat recidivism, Congress should pass a bill that would lift the ban on Pell grants for all eligible incarcerated individuals.” – **Ronal W. Serpas, Executive Director, Law Enforcement Leaders; Former Police Commissioner, New Orleans, Louisiana; and Former Police Chief, Nashville, Tennessee**

“It is common knowledge that higher education helps inmates overcome steep employment obstacles they face after release and helps them reintegrate into their communities. However, the benefits of in-prison higher education opportunities start in prison. Restoring federal Pell grant eligibility for inmates will create more opportunities for needed culture change in prisons, and will allow for rehabilitation and redemption. If we, as a society, want to be serious about reducing crime, we have to look at how time during incarceration can play a role in increasing success for second chances.” – **Rick Raemisch, Former Director of Colorado Department of Corrections, and Member, Law Enforcement Leaders**

Read Law Enforcement Leaders’ [open letter](#) to the House Committee on Education and Labor and the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions urging for legislation that would reinstate eligibility for federal Pell Grants for all financially eligible incarcerated students.

To inquire further with Executive Director Serpas and other law enforcement experts, or learn more about Law Enforcement Leaders, please contact Sunwoo Oh at sunwoo.oh@lawenforcementleaders.org or (646) 925-8703.

###

About Law Enforcement Leaders

Law Enforcement Leaders unites nearly 200 current and former police chiefs, sheriffs, federal and state prosecutors, and attorneys general from all 50 states and across the political spectrum to urge for a reduction in both crime and incarceration. We believe that the country can reduce incarceration while keeping down crime, and we support changes to our criminal justice system to achieve that goal.