

June 20, 2019

United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: ACLU's Criminal Justice Vote Recommendations for H.R.
3055, Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Act, 2020



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Susan Herman
President

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Director*

Dear Members of Congress:

On behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), we write to express the following vote recommendations on criminal justice amendments to H.R. 3055, Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2020.

Appropriators have the opportunity to make investments that would reduce mass incarceration, improve public safety, and build trust between law enforcement and communities.

We urge you to seize that opportunity and vote “YES” on the following amendments:

- Reps. Blumenauer, Norton, McClintock Amendment No. 17
- Rep. Ocasio-Cortez Amendment No. 78
- Reps. Omar, Pressley Amendment No. 79
- Rep. Pressley Amendment No. 83

Rep. Blumenauer, Rep. Norton, and Rep. McClintock Amendment No. 17

This amendment would prohibit the Department of Justice (DOJ) from interfering with states that have legalized marijuana. The failed war on marijuana has ruined lives and been a key driver of mass criminalization in this country. With 33 states passing medical marijuana laws and 11 states and Washington, DC passing legalization bills, this amendment sends the right message to DOJ that marijuana enforcement should not be a federal priority.

Rep. Ocasio-Cortez Amendment No. 78

This amendment would move funding from the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to the Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Program (COAP), shifting funding from opioid enforcement to treatment. Congress must take a public health approach to the opioid crisis, given the failures of the enforcement-only approach witnessed with the “Drug War.”

Rep. Omar and Rep. Pressley Amendment No. 79

This amendment would prohibit funding for the use of solitary confinement in Federal prisons and jails. Long-term isolation has exorbitant personal and financial costs, does nothing to rehabilitate prisoners, and exacerbates mental illness—even sometimes causing it in people who were healthy before being placed in solitary confinement.

Rep. Pressley Amendment No. 83

This amendment would direct funding to the Department of Justice’s (DOJ’s) Children of Incarcerated Parents program to support reentry services and family reunification after release. An incarcerated person’s connection to their family is often a critical component to their successful reentry.

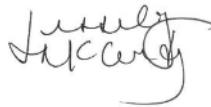
Again, we encourage you to vote “YES” on the above described amendments, Thank you for consideration.

If you have any questions, please contact Kanya Bennett, Senior Legislative Counsel, at kbennett@aclu.org or Jesselyn McCurdy, Deputy Director, at jmccurdy@aclu.org.

Sincerely,



Ronald Newman
National Political Director



Jesselyn McCurdy
Deputy Director