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The Honorable Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in today's roundtable with state leaders on prison reform. For nearly twenty years, Louisiana was known as the nation's incarceration capital. Our imprisonment rate was nearly double the national average. We were spending roughly \$700 million annually on corrections, more than any other line item except education and healthcare, but our communities were not any safer for it. We placed a huge burden on our taxpayers without a good return on investment in terms of public safety: one in three released inmates return to prisons within three years. Further, Louisiana sent people to prison for nonviolent offenses at 1.5 to 3 times the rate of other southern states with similar rates.

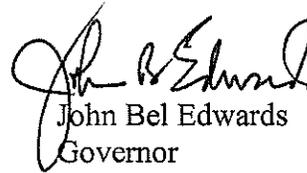
With the technical support from The Pew Charitable Trusts, we convened a bipartisan task force and spent a year scrutinizing our correctional policies and practices. In June of 2017, I signed into law the most expansive criminal justice reform package in Louisiana's history. This reform package brings Louisiana's archaic sentencing laws in line with the rest of the country and expands existing rehabilitation and workforce training programs proven to reduce recidivism. Republicans, Democrats and Independents, as well as the business and religious community, came together to pass these historic reforms. As a result, Louisiana no longer has the highest imprisonment rate in the nation.

It is my honor to invite you and key members of your staff to visit our great state to learn firsthand about our path to criminal justice reform. One of the places I would like you to visit is the largest maximum security prison in the country, Louisiana State Penitentiary (LSP), which is comprised of 18,000 acres located in Angola, Louisiana. LSP offers a variety of nationally recognized workforce development, faith based, educational and victim reconciliation programs to the 6,000 inmates housed on the compound. Among many other services, LSP has an onsite accredited Bible college and a prison hospice program that the National Hospice Association has called a "model for all prison programs." It is no secret that the implementation of these types of programs is what helped to transform LSP from one of the bloodiest prisons in America to a place of hope, transformation and reconciliation.

The reentry programming and services at LSP are key examples of how we plan to utilize the savings from our reforms to better prepare those being released from our prison system. In fact, the first year savings is dedicated specifically to the five parishes that generate nearly 50% of Louisiana's prison admissions and will be used to create programs and services like these in the local level facilities that house state prisoners.

I believe you will gain a great deal of insight by visiting Louisiana State Penitentiary and I look forward to welcoming you to Louisiana on behalf of the people I serve.

With Warm Regards,



John Bel Edwards
Governor