

Thank all of you for being here. I really do appreciate the opportunity to be here with this group of people behind me. You all are here to witness this, to memorialize, and to talk about what a joy it is going to be.

I'm going to step to the podium and now I guess better address you all. Thank you for being here so we can talk about this legislation that I'm about the sign. We've got folks here today that have traveled all the way from Washington DC and I appreciate their hard work to travel here and be with us as we take this important step. Holly Harris from the US Justice Action Network is here. I want to thank Holly. Also is Liz here? Liz Magnum is here representing the Pelican Institute and I believe Gene Mills is here. Gene, thank you for being here from the Family Forum. Also representatives from the Faith and Freedom Coalition who couldn't be here today but they clearly played a very pivotal role in making today a reality. In particular, I want to thank Representative Denise Marcel, the author, who championed this bill that is known as "Ban the Box" and it it applies to public employers, so that as individuals seek employment with public entities they won't be asked initially to disclose any the criminal history. So that they can let the folks know who they are, what their qualifications are, their interest in seeking employment, their ability to do the job and then later on in the process anything relating to their criminal history can be ascertained and taken into consideration but this allows people to get their foot in the door and hopefully be reintegrated into society with a better opportunity to get a job and to become productive members of society, taxpayers if you will rather than tax consumers because we know people who cannot be employed typically remain dependent upon state services and they consume tax dollars. So thank you for being here as we celebrate this common-sense approach to killing two birds with one stone, building the diverse in competitive workforce we need in Louisiana and finding ways for previously incarcerated individuals to reintegrate into society. So we we can always ensure success, but we've got to do more to ensure that people have opportunity for success. This bill is a step in that direction. That's a goal of this administration and certainly the legislation is in line with that. So I'm feel thrilled to make it all today now it's time for me to sit down here, right?

Alright we have banned the box. (Applause)