

# Support National Criminal Justice Commission Act of 2011

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4 **WHEREAS** the United States of America incarcerates five times more citizens per capita  
5 than any other nation in the world, at an annual cost of \$63.4 Billion;

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7 **WHEREAS** currently 2.4 million citizens are behind bars and 7-10 million are unable to  
8 vote due to issues ranging from incarceration, probation, parole, and unsatisfied court  
9 fines, making them taxpayers without representation;

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11 **WHEREAS** the U.S. population is roughly 12% African American and 14% Hispanic  
12 American, yet these populations comprise 60% of those imprisoned, and this fact has a  
13 devastatingly disproportionate impact on our minority populations;

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15 **WHEREAS** the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that there are  
16 7.4 million children with a parent under correctional supervision;

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18 **WHEREAS** in our society the families of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated  
19 persons are routinely subjected to discrimination in housing and employment;

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21 **WHEREAS** strong family support is a major deterrent to reoffending; statistics show  
22 that 50% of those released will reoffend within 3 years without such support from  
23 community and family;

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25 **WHEREAS** multiple studies show stress factors for families of people who are  
26 incarcerated increase their risks for diabetes and heart disease. Current studies connect  
27 the trauma of separation from a parent with a host of mental health issues that can lead  
28 to school failure and dropout rates which are the best predictors of future criminality;

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30 **WHEREAS** the lack of community support for the families of those who have  
31 successfully repaid their debts to society and are attempting to renew their lives causes  
32 undue hardship and can decrease public safety. Post-incarceration reentry programs  
33 are haphazard and often nonexistent, undermining public safety and making it  
34 extremely difficult for ex-offenders to return to society as fully, contributing members;  
35 and

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37 **WHEREAS** U.S. Senator Jim Webb's National Criminal Justice Commission Act is  
38 cosigned by Senator Patty Murray and 18 others, and is supported by 70 organizations  
39 including the National Sheriff's Association, Fraternal Order of Police, International  
40 Association of Chiefs of Police, U.S. Conference on Mayors, United States Sentencing  
41 Commission, National ACLU and National NAACP;

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43 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Washington State Democrats forward this  
44 resolution to Senator Patrick Leahy, Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and to the  
45 members of the Washington State Congressional delegation to urge them to advocate  
46 for passage of the National Criminal Justice Commission Act of 2011, for review and  
47 evaluation of the Criminal Justice System so as to develop recommendations for reform.  
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50 Submitted by the 37<sup>th</sup> Legislative District Democrats to the Washington State  
51 Democratic Central Committee for consideration at its June 2, 2012 Convention. (Date  
52 Submitted 4/30/2012)

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54 Recommended 'PASS WITH AMENDMENTS' by the Subcommittee on Civil and  
55 Human Rights, Government and Political Reform, and Law and the Justice System at its  
56 May 19<sup>th</sup> meeting in Kent.

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58 Recommended 'PASS' by the Platform Committee at its June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting in Seattle.

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60 'PASSED' by the Washington State Democratic Convention at its June 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in  
61 Seattle.