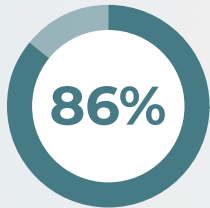


# WINNING ON SAFETY AND CRIME

## FIRST STEP ACT FACT SHEET

### OVERVIEW

The policies of the 2018 First Step Act align closely with the views of an overwhelming majority of Republican voters. Attacks on the First Step Act by Republican candidates are viewed by Republican voters as political posturing.



The policies contained in the First Step Act “**almost perfectly matched**” or were “**pretty close**” to views of 86% of Republicans polled from April-June 2023.

Additionally, focus group conversation among older Republican men in the last week of June exposed a sentiment that **attacks on the First Step Act were “attacks on Trump” and mere “political posturing.”**

### FIRST STEP ACT BACKGROUND

#### What does the First Step Act do?

- Assesses low-level offenders for educational and occupational programming to break the prison revolving door.
- Incentivizes low- and minimal-risk offenders to participate in recidivism-reducing programming, allowing them to earn time in pre-release custody.
- Grants judges flexibility in sentencing to protect communities, promote rehabilitation, and deliver justice. Maximum penalties remain unaffected.
- Enables certain prisoners to petition for resentencing under the new law, subject to judges' discretion based on individual circumstances.
- Prohibits shackling of pregnant inmates unless posing significant flight or safety risks.
- Clarifies existing good time statute, increasing potential credit from 47 to 54 days per year.
- Establishes enhanced reporting and oversight for the federal criminal justice system.

#### Where did the First Step Act come from?

- The First Step Act draws inspiration from successful criminal justice reforms in conservative states like Texas, Utah, Georgia, Kansas, and South Carolina. These states implemented reforms focused on accountability, individuality, and incentives, resulting in reduced recidivism rates and cost savings.
- The First Step Act had 28 Republican sponsors, was passed by a Republican U.S. Senate led by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and a Republican U.S. House of Representatives led by Speaker Paul Ryan and was signed by President Donald Trump. Ultimately, 264 Republicans from the U.S. Congress voted for the First Step Act.

#### The Results of the First Step Act (so far):

- A recidivism rate of just over 12% for the 29,944 released under the First Step Act compared to a 43% recidivism rate for the general population released from federal prisons.
- Increased participation in Evidence Based Recidivism Reduction Programs by 35% since enactment.

1. U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons. “First Step Act Overview.” Accessed July 3, 2023. <https://www.bop.gov/inmates/fsa/overview.jsp>.

