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NAACP Legal Defense Fund Statement on the House Judiciary Committee Advancing the First Step Act

Today, the House Judiciary Committee marked up and advanced the First Step Act (FSA). Yesterday, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) joined over 70 other organizations in [opposing](#) the bill. [Todd A. Cox](#), LDF's Policy Director, issued the following statement on the bill moving forward:

“Our nation is in desperate need of comprehensive, exhaustive criminal justice reform, but the First Step Act falls woefully short of the type of dramatic overhaul necessary. The Act fails to address the root causes of mass incarceration as well as the related racial inequality inherent in the criminal justice system, and, in some areas, actually takes us backwards. We need holistic reform that both mitigates unfair sentencing laws on the front-end while also strengthening reentry programs on the back-end, particularly given the Trump Administration’s efforts to return this country to the “tough on crime” policies of the 1980s and 1990s that continue to devastate Black communities to this day. Alone, back-end reforms will only help a small fraction of those with criminal convictions while our country’s prisons continue to be unjustly and disproportionately filled by communities of color. As the FSA moves on to the full House, we strongly urge Representatives to vote no on this wholly inadequate attempt at reform.”

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.