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LDF Statement on the House's Passage of the FIRST STEP Act

Today, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the FIRST STEP Act. The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) joined more than 70 organizations in [opposing](#) the bill because it does little to reform prisons or the federal justice system. [Todd A. Cox](#), LDF's Policy Director, issued the following statement:

“Time and again, we have raised substantive concerns about the FIRST STEP Act, which leaves the fate of the nation’s prisoners in the hands of Jeff Sessions – an individual with a record of hostility to civil rights and an avowed opponent to the prison reform -- and which fosters racial disparities. Our concerns have gone unaddressed. As this issue moves to the Senate, we call on Senators to engage in a rigorous examination of the claims made by the proponents of the FIRST STEP Act to ensure not only that the Act’s promises are kept, but that Congress delivers meaningful criminal justice reform that also seeks to reform the overly harsh sentencing regime that has resulted in the mass incarceration of far too many people, disproportionately persons of color, for far too long, and at great economic and social costs.”

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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.