



February 14, 2023

The Honorable Jim Jordan
Chairman
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Stacey Plaskett
Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Jim Jordan and Ranking Member Stacey Plaskett,

On behalf of Dream.Org and the millions of Americans impacted by the justice system, we want to congratulate you on your new roles as leaders of the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government. As you begin to plan the work of this committee, we stand ready to support your work through testimony and outreach and urge you to use this opportunity to highlight all of the ways that law enforcement overreach has threatened the rights of Americans across the spectrum.

Dream.Org is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to closing prison doors and opening doors of opportunity, and we believe in working with anyone to make that happen. That is why, under President Donald Trump, we united Democrats and Republicans around the First Step Act, which helped thousands of people incarcerated on unfair prison sentences come home sooner. Now, we believe your Committee presents an historic opportunity to make a bipartisan impact on our criminal legal system once again.

Overreach by law enforcement has been used against Americans regardless of political affiliation, and is a driver behind our overburdened and underperforming prisons. In fact, Chairman Jordan has previously questioned the inhumane conditions and possible civil rights violations for people incarcerated in Washington, DC prisons.¹ These conditions are not bound by political party or geography and are a reality for millions of incarcerated individuals across the country today. As you examine whether our justice system is serving our country, we encourage you to also examine the conditions faced by incarcerated people in every state. To that end, we would like to offer testimony from one of our formerly incarcerated Empathy Network leaders about these problems and how Congress can help protect the rights of all Americans.

We also share your concerns about the ways innocent Americans can be threatened by unchecked law enforcement. We are particularly concerned about the use of “conspiracy” charges. These charges are frequently leveled against a partner or family member of a suspect

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-sarGRFwFc>



in order to pressure them to provide testimony or to simply win a conviction, even if they had no role in the underlying crime. Guilt by association is ruining lives, which is why we have advocated to reform certain conspiracy laws.

We look forward to the chance to support your committee's work and to uplift your solutions to law enforcement overreach, and we are thankful for your commitment to standing up for every American's civil rights, regardless of political affiliation.

Sincerely,

Kandia Milton
Policy Director, Dream.Org Justice Team