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On Behalf Of:
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When it comes to rehabilitation within the community, education is one of the most important tools those recently incarcerated can use. Education can be a gateway to social and economic mobility. Prison education programs lower recidivism rates and increase employment opportunities post-release. Compared with 18 percent of the general population, approximately 41 percent of incarcerated individuals do not hold a high school diploma. Similarly, while 48 percent of general population has received any postsecondary or college education, only 24 percent of people in federal prisons have received the same level of education. In 2016, the Vera Institute of Justice reported that only 35 percent of state prisons provide college-level courses, and these programs only serve 6 percent of incarcerated individuals nationwide. In 2015, the Obama administration announced the Second Chance Pell Pilot program—an experimental program allowing 12,000 qualifying incarcerated students to take college-level courses while in prison. According to a study by the U.S. Sentencing Commission (USSC), nearly half of all individuals released from federal prisons are rearrested within eight years of their release, and around half of those rearrested are sent back to jail. The same study found that individuals younger than 21 who are released from federal prison are rearrested at the highest rates of any age group. Individuals who did not complete high school were rearrested at the highest rate—60.4 percent—while those who had a college degree were rearrested at a rate of 19.1 percent. While incarcerated young adults and school-aged children are more likely to be rearrested, they also have a lot to gain from educational opportunities while in prison. There is a logical argument for prison education: It is a cost-effective way to reduce crime and leads to long-term benefits across the entire U.S. population. In 2016, the RAND Corporation produced a report that showed that individuals who participate in any type of educational program while in prison are 43 percent less likely to return to prison. In addition to reducing recidivism, education can improve outcomes from one generation to the next. Research shows that children with parents with college degrees are more likely to complete college, which can create social mobility for families. Prisons with college programs have less violence among incarcerated individuals, which creates a safer environment for both incarcerated individuals and prison staff. The significant personal benefits of prison education include increased personal income, lower unemployment, greater political engagement and volunteerism, and improved health outcomes. While investing in prison education programs will require upfront funding, the long-term economic benefits for states and localities are considerable. For every dollar spent on prison education, taxpayers are estimated to save four to five dollars that would have been spent on incarceration. Putting more money back into consumers' pockets and providing previously incarcerated individuals the necessary tools to be competitive in

the job market will spur economic activity and productivity. It will also help previously incarcerated individuals become stronger players in the market—through taxes and purchasing power—and more self-sufficient citizens less reliant on government programs. Missouri, for example, saved an average of \$25,000 per year for every incarcerated individual who left prison and did not return. Nationally, the U.S. economy is estimated to lose around \$60 billion per year from loss of labor from the high numbers of incarcerated individuals.