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Rangel Calls for Action on 1 in 100 Americans Now in Prison

March 12, 2008 | [Press Releases](#)

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Following the astounding report that 1 in 100 American adults are currently incarcerated, Congressman Rangel joined calls by members of Congress for fair, sensible, and ir reform to the criminal justice system.

Congressman Rangel has introduced a series of bills meant to restore credibility to the system and end its racially disproportionate skew. The recently released Pew Research Center announced that 1 in 15 Black adults and 1 in 34 Hispanic adults are in prison – numbers much greater than the overall, national average.

"These numbers serve to bring an urgency to our campaign and to confirm to many what we've known all along: We've got to do more," Rangel said. "We've got to do more in the way of no-entry or diversion initiatives, sentencing reform, and drug treatment and prevention. We owe it to those kids, those kids who are floundering in failing schools, dropping out in record rates, and caught in a life of poverty and hopelessness."

Congressman Rangel's Crack Cocaine Equitable Sentencing Act would eliminate the sentencing disparity between crack cocaine and powder cocaine offenses, and his Chance for Ex-Offenders Act offers expungement to first-time offenders who serve their sentences, remain substance-abuse free, earn an education, and complete a year of community service, in turn reducing recidivism.

The House and Senate have already passed with bipartisan majorities the Second Step Act of 2007, which provides resources for prisoner reentry in an effort to tamp down recidivism rates. It is now up to President Bush to sign it into law and to do so soon.

"This is a matter of common sense. The facts have made it abundantly clear," Rangel said. "This country is in desperate need of reform, and the time for it is now."

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