

By: J. Johnson of Harris

H.R. No. 1176

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, April 2023 has been recognized by presidential  
2 proclamation as Second Chance Month to honor those who have  
3 successfully reentered society after being incarcerated and to pay  
4 tribute to the community groups, faith-based organizations, and  
5 employers that are helping to reduce recidivism among former  
6 inmates; and

7 WHEREAS, Individuals who have been incarcerated face  
8 significant barriers in returning to life outside of a detention  
9 facility; those who have successfully made that transition are  
10 worthy of recognition, not only because of the challenges they have  
11 overcome but also because of the positive example they provide to  
12 others who are walking the same path; and

13 WHEREAS, The State of Texas is home to many men and women who  
14 have transcended their troubled pasts to become productive  
15 citizens; among their numbers are Cynthia Simons and Justin  
16 Martinez, who have dedicated themselves to assisting formerly  
17 incarcerated Texans in rebuilding their lives; and

18 WHEREAS, Since her release from prison, Cynthia Simons has  
19 become a champion for incarcerated women and their families and has  
20 made a significant difference through her efforts as a peer leader  
21 and reentry specialist; she has served as a member of the  
22 Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable and of the board of  
23 MEASURE, a Black-led organization that works to promote data equity  
24 to address community policing as well as health, education, and

1 economic disparities; she is an advocate for the liberation of  
2 Black people across the State of Texas, and she has played a pivotal  
3 role in restoring parental rights to families torn apart by  
4 incarceration; and

5 WHEREAS, After being incarcerated, Justin Martinez completed  
6 his master's degree in legal studies with a paralegal  
7 certification; he has since become a policy analyst, and through  
8 his research and advocacy, he strives to dismantle systems of  
9 oppression and to help Texans break the cycle of incarceration; and

10 WHEREAS, Many more individuals throughout our state have  
11 likewise emerged from the criminal justice system to realize  
12 meaningful goals in a broad range of endeavors, and their  
13 experiences offer a moving testament to the human potential for  
14 redemption; now, therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 88th Texas  
16 Legislature hereby recognize April 2023 as Second Chance Month,  
17 honor Cynthia Simons and Justin Martinez for their contributions as  
18 activists for criminal justice reform and rehabilitation, and  
19 commend those organizations and individuals who are assisting  
20 former inmates in reintegrating into society.