

By: J. Johnson of Harris

H.R. No. 1177

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 Maggie Luna and Jennifer Toon,  
16 who are helping to make a difference in the lives of others who have  
17 faced obstacles following reentry; and

18 WHEREAS, Since her release from prison, Maggie Luna has  
19 dedicated herself to empowering, organizing, and mobilizing others  
20 at the state and local levels to enact meaningful change for inmates  
21 and formerly incarcerated individuals, which she has accomplished  
22 chiefly through her work as head of the Statewide Leadership  
23 Council; through her advocacy and leadership, she also played a  
24 pivotal role in saving the life of death row inmate Melissa Lucio,

1 who was granted a stay of execution by the Texas Court of Criminal  
2 Appeals in April 2022; Ms. Luna is an alumna of JustLeadershipUSA,  
3 and she currently serves on the community advisory council of the  
4 Texas After Violence Project, a criminal justice reform group; and

5 WHEREAS, After serving two decades in prison, beginning at  
6 the age of 15, Jennifer Toon has become a statewide policy expert  
7 and a leader in justice reform for incarcerated and returning  
8 women, children, and people with disabilities; she is the founder  
9 of the Lioness Justice Impacted Women's Alliance, and she currently  
10 serves as head of Finish the 5, a campaign to close youth prisons in  
11 Texas, and as a community advisor for the Texas After Violence  
12 Project; and

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

18 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 88th Texas  
19 Legislature hereby recognize April 2023 as Second Chance Month,  
20 honor Maggie Luna and Jennifer Toon for their contributions as  
21 activists for criminal justice reform and rehabilitation, and  
22 commend those organizations and individuals who are assisting  
23 former inmates in reintegrating into society.