88R23658 BK-D

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R E S O L U T I O N

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

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

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

WHEREAS, Since her release from prison, Cynthia Simons has become a champion for incarcerated women and their families and has made a significant difference through her efforts as a peer leader and reentry specialist; she has served as a member of the Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable and of the board of MEASURE, a Black-led organization that works to promote data equity to address community policing as well as health, education, and economic disparities; she is an advocate for the liberation of Black people across the State of Texas, and she has played a pivotal role in restoring parental rights to families torn apart by incarceration; and

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

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

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