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NEWS RELEASE

GOV. PRITZKER SIGNS LANDMARK ANTI-RECIDIVISM LEGISLATION

NLEN Exemplifies Success of Reintegration Programs

CHICAGO – Governor JB Pritzker signed Senate Bill 423, implementing mandatory supervised release (MSR) reforms this morning at the North Lawndale Employment Network.

The bill supports NLEN's mission of reintegrating individuals into the community while lowering the possibility of recidivism. The Governor was joined at the bill signing by state and local officials, NLEN CEO Brenda Palms, Lt. Gov Juliana Stratton, and artist and activist Meek Mill, who has long been an advocate for criminal justice reform.

"It's easy for us to think about locking people up," Palms said, "but the reality is 90 percent of the people locked up will be released. This bill will help elevate the importance of clearly defining how we reintegrate people back into society, something the North Lawndale Employment Network has been working on for the past 15 years. By signing this bill, the governor is telling us we can begin the process immediately. By keeping people who have made mistakes with their families and their communities we are creating a chance for everyone to benefit."

The new legislation, drafted by the Illinois Department of Corrections, the Prisoner Review Board, the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts, the Reform Alliance, the Illinois Sheriff's Association, and multiple community groups, will implement criminal justice reforms including:

- **Expanding education and training credits beyond high school**
- **Establishing quarterly reporting to provide timely updates to individuals on MSR and decision-makers on the Prisoner Review Board through the existing electronic system**
- **Drug testing only upon suspicion of illicit drug use**
- **Discretionary virtue reporting to increase reporting compliance and decrease conflicts**
- **Disclosure of Illinois Department of Corrections sanctions matrix for violations of MSR**

These evidence-based provisions will create a more transparent supervision system that will lower recidivism, support communities, and better serve the individuals most at risk, as well as their families.

“When you're locked up, your kids are locked up as well,” said Sadie Joseph, a former participant in NLEN’s Sweet Beginnings program and now an NLEN client solutions specialist and a member of the Illinois Department of Corrections Adult Advisory Board. “MSR means you’ll be able to continue to raise your kids and get back on your feet. It means the world to your kids.”

In North Lawndale, 57% of adults have been impacted by incarceration. NLEN serves 1,100 people every year, 70% of whom are returning citizens or have had some experience with the criminal justice system. Among NLEN participants, the average recidivism rate is less than 10 percent, compared to 53% statewide.

NLEN opened a new workforce development campus in August 2021 that includes the Sweet Beginnings production facility and offices and the beelove cafe.

About North Lawndale Employment Network (NLEN)

The North Lawndale Employment Network was founded in 1999 through a community planning effort led by the Steans Family Foundation to serve the unmet employment needs of the North Lawndale community. Today, NLEN serves more than 1,100 people annually, helping them to gain new skills, improve their self-worth, secure jobs, and become financially secure. For more information, please visit the NLEN website: <https://www.nlen.org> or call 773-638-1825.

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