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****OFFICIAL STATEMENT****

FRRC Issues Statement Expressing Disappointment In Governor’s Decision To Veto Juvenile Diversion Program Expunction Bill

FLORIDA (June 30, 2021) – The following is the statement by Florida Rights Restoration Coalition (FRRC) Executive Director, Desmond Meade, concerning the veto of SB 274, the Juvenile Diversion Program Expunction legislation recently passed by State Representative David Smith (R-Winter Springs) and State Senator Keith Perry (R-Gainesville), and unanimously approved by the Florida legislature.

“Governor DeSantis missed an opportunity to stimulate our economy through job growth and to show he believes in second chances. This was an opportunity for him to promote a bipartisan effort focused on solutions that placed people over politics. The Governor’s decision to veto SB274 will take thousands of young people out of the job market at exactly the time our state and businesses are hoping people will get hired. This veto will hurt public safety, local job opportunities and negatively impact the real lives of tens of thousands of young people and their families. We deserve better.” - *Desmond Meade*

In January, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement estimated more than 26,900 minors could qualify for juvenile diversion expunction as a result of this legislation. According to a study by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in 2020, “low risk” assessed youth, like those in Florida’s diversion programs, are 45% less likely to reoffend than comparable youth facing formal court processing. By providing young people with a second chance at life, through the sealing and expungement of juvenile records, we can create pathways to higher education, stable employment, and secure housing. All these things will lead to a stronger economy and safer communities for everyone.

About the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition

FRRC is a grassroots, membership organization run by Returning Citizens (Formerly Convicted Persons) who are dedicated to ending the disenfranchisement and discrimination against people with convictions and creating a more comprehensive and humane reentry system that will enhance successful reentry, reduce recidivism, and increase public safety. For more information, visit <https://floridarrc.com/>.

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