

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 9, 2008

The Honorable Alan Mollohan
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and
Related Agencies
Room H-310, The Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and
Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Mollohan and Ranking Member Frelinghuysen:

We write to express our strong support for a FY 2009 appropriation of \$165 million to fully fund the Second Chance Act of 2007. The Second Chance Act is the first-of-its-kind legislation that takes a comprehensive approach to reducing recidivism by coordinating reentry services and criminal justice policies at the federal, state and local levels. Moreover, it provides State governments, whose correction budgets are consuming an ever larger portion of the general fund, much needed relief while reconnecting family members and creating safer communities.

The Second Chance Act was approved by both chambers of Congress and is supported by a broad spectrum of leaders representing diverse fields including law enforcement, corrections, courts, and behavioral health providers. What is more, President George Bush expressed his support by signing the Second Chance Act of 2007 into law on Wednesday, April 9, 2008 and charging his administration with the responsibility of assuring the Second Chance Act is "implemented properly . . . to help the formerly incarcerated build new lives as productive members of our society." (White House Office of the Press Secretary)

The Second Chance Act reauthorizes existing adult and juvenile offender State and local reentry demonstration projects within the Department of Justice. It directs several improvements, including coordination among service providers, supervision services and Reentry Task Forces, and between State substance abuse agencies and criminal justice agencies. Allowable uses of funds include employment services, substance abuse treatment, housing, family programming, mentoring, victims services, and methods to improve release and revocation decisions using risk-assessment tools.

Moreover, The Second Chance Act will authorize grants: to improve offender reentry services and the creation of State and Local Reentry Courts, similar to those established for non-violent drug offenders; to develop and implement qualified drug treatment programs as alternatives for imprisonment; to evaluate and improve academic and vocational education for offenders in prison, jails and juvenile facilities, and then recommend to the Attorney General best practices for such educational programs; to make grants to States, local units of government and Indian tribes to provide technology career training to prisoners; to provide mentoring and other transitional services to adult and juvenile offenders reentering the community; and to assist eligible ex-offenders in obtaining and retaining employment in coordination with One-Stop partners established under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

Please support FY 2009 full funding of the entire Second Chance Act to help reduce recidivism and improve public safety and corrections throughout the country.

Sincerely,