

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 23, 2016

The Honorable John Culberson
Chair, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Capitol Building, H-310
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Honda
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Culberson and Ranking Member Honda:

Please support continued funding for the Second Chance Act programs in FY 2017.

At the end of 2014, federal, state, and local correctional facilities held more than 2.2 million people. This amounted to at least one in every 200 residents. Unfortunately, most individuals face numerous challenges when returning to the community from prison, and research indicates that over half return to prison within three years of their release. The Second Chance Act is a common sense, evidence-based approach to improving public safety.

These grants will provide crucial resources at a time when they are desperately needed.

- **Texas** has seen a significant decline in recidivism of **28 percent** since 2000¹ by expanding the capacity of existing treatment programs and alternatives to incarceration, including transitional housing for parolees, in-prison treatment for substance abuse, and outpatient substance abuse treatment for people under probation supervision.² Agencies and organizations in Texas have received a total of 28 Second Chance grants since 2009.
- In **California**, a total of 104,981 adult men and women were released from CDCR Adult Institutions in FY 2009-10. When assessed for risk of reoffending using the CSRA, 53.8 percent of offenders released were identified as high-risk for being convicted of a new crime, 27.3 percent were medium-risk, and 17.8 percent were low-risk. The overall return-to-prison rate for the FY 2009-10 cohort (54.3 percent) is 6.7 percentage points lower than the FY 2008-09 cohort (61 percent) and marks the largest decline in returns-to-prison between the FY 2002-03 and FY 2009-10 cohorts.³ Agencies and organizations in California have received a total of 69 Second Chance grants since 2009.

Though individuals face many challenges when they return from prison or jail to the community, research confirms that comprehensive, coordinated services can help formerly incarcerated individuals find stable employment and housing, thereby reducing recidivism.

¹ Texas Legislative Budget Board, *Statewide Criminal Justice Recidivism and Revocation Rates* (Austin: Texas Legislative Budget Board, 2013), available at www.lbb.state.tx.us/Public_Safety_Criminal_Justice/RecRev_Rates/Statewide%20Criminal%20Justice%20Recidivism%20and%20Revocation%20Rates2012.pdf.

² Council of State Governments Justice Center, *States Report Reductions in Recidivism* (New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2012), available at csgjusticecenter.org/documents/0000/1569/9.24.12_Recidivism_Reductions_9-24_lo_res.pdf.

³ Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, *2014 Outcome Evaluation Report* (Sacramento: California, 2015), available at http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Adult_Research_Branch/Research_Documents/2014_Outcome_Evaluation_Report_7-6-2015.pdf.

- a. The Allegheny County (PA) Reentry Initiative links sentenced individuals with service coordination, education, job readiness, treatment, family supports, and other services at least five months prior to release. Service providers assess the risk and need of every individual during his or her first 30 days in jail collaborate with jail staff to direct individuals to needed in-jail services and treatments. The program then prepares participants for discharge and connects them with supports in the community. A recent evaluation conducted by the Urban Institute found that the program had a reduced rearrest rates among participants by more than 50 percent.
- b. The Texas Juvenile Justice Department's Second Chance Act-funded program provides family-focused reentry services to gang-affiliated youth, ages 13-19. Based on assessments at intake, the agency offers comprehensive case management and a range of services based on the individual needs of each youth. According to a recent study of past program participants, approximately 80 percent had not been rearrested within 20 weeks of release, compared to 70 percent of the youth in a comparison group.
- c. The Harlem Parole Reentry Court in New York City emphasizes job readiness and the use of a risk assessment tool to determine individuals' risk levels and needs. According to an ongoing evaluation, the reincarceration rate for program participants 12 months after release was 14.7 percent, compared to 19.3 percent for a group of similar individuals who were on parole but did not participate in the reentry court. Additionally, about one-third of participants were employed 12 months after release, compared to only a quarter of the comparison group, and more participants were employed full-time than in the comparison group (25 percent vs. 19.8 percent).
- d. The Second Chance Act grant supports the Ohio Rural Recidivism Reduction Model, a collaborative effort among Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, local courts, community corrections entities, local reentry coalitions, and local service providers. Addressing the remoteness and scarcity of services in rural communities that can further impede a successful transition from incarceration, the program serves a largely Appalachian region comprised of Athens, Fayette, Highland, Hocking, Jackson, Pickaway, Pike, Ross, Scioto, and Vinton Counties. Depending on their release type, program participants will enter a community-based correctional facility, a halfway house, or supervision by the Adult Parole Authority; participants will also be connected to one of three Local Reentry Coalition hubs and thereafter referred to one of four programs located within the targeted area.

In addition to contributing to better outcomes for individuals, families, and communities, reentry initiatives may also have significant cost saving for state and local jurisdictions, as reductions in recidivism lead to reductions in the cost associated with crime, incarceration, and victimization. Below are examples of how investing in reentry has been shown to reduce recidivism and result in cost savings across the U.S.:

- Analysis of multiple evidence-based criminal justice initiatives in Washington determined that the majority resulted in monetary benefits for the state's taxpayers. Many of these initiatives are examples of the types of reentry programs funded by the Second Chance Act, including: community-based employment support and training (benefit-to-cost ratio of \$40.76, or return of \$40.76 for every \$1 spent), prison-based vocational education (ratio: \$13.01), cognitive-behavioral therapy for medium- and high-risk individuals (\$23.55), community-based substance abuse treatment (\$11.05), and coordinated services for youth in the juvenile justice system (\$13.94).ⁱ
- In a meta-analysis of 58 studies, researchers concluded that cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) programs reduced an individual's risk of recidivism by 25 to 50 percent.ⁱⁱ CBT focuses on individual accountability and addresses the thinking processes that contribute to criminal behavior.
- The use of graduated sanctions and incentives has great potential for cost savings, as many

jurisdictions have found community-based treatment to be less expensive and more effective than incarceration or prison-based treatments.ⁱⁱⁱ

- Substance abuse treatment—particularly treatment for co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders—has been shown to reduce costs associated with crime.^{iv}
- Supportive housing in Seattle for individuals with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders resulted in more than \$4 million in cost-savings after one year through significant reductions in jail bookings and jail days.^v
- Some evidence suggests that people released from prison and jail that hold jobs in the community are less likely to recidivate, especially when earnings are above minimum wage.^{vi} Research also shows that job stability over an extended period of time can reduce the likelihood that an individual will reoffend.^{vii}
- Researchers have found that a 5-percent increase in high school graduation rates among males would produce an annual savings of nearly \$5 billion in crime-related expenses in the United States.^{viii}
- Pittsburgh's Program for Offenders, a community corrections facility providing reentry services to individuals in Allegheny County, found that program participants had lower rates of recidivism when compared to the rate for all Allegheny County Jail inmates, resulting in \$3.6 million in net savings to the county. Services include case management, substance abuse treatment, family reunification services and other family-based support, financial literacy education, housing referrals, and assistance with job search and placement.^{ix}

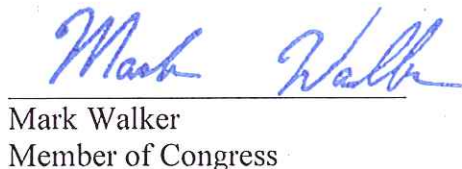
The Second Chance Act, which passed with overwhelming bipartisan support and was signed into law in April 2008, authorized \$165 million for programs that will improve coordination of reentry services and policies at the state and local levels. The Second Chance Act includes a program for Adult and Juvenile Offender State and Local Reentry Demonstration Projects, which improve coordination of reentry initiatives and implement evidence-based practices. The Second Chance Act also authorizes a program for Mentoring Grants to Nonprofit organizations, which provide mentoring and other transitional services to adult and juvenile offenders reentering the community.

State and local governments and nonprofit organizations around the country are eager to launch innovative reentry programs, and families and communities are desperate to access the services the Second Chance Act will provide. Please support FY 2017 funding for the Second Chance Act.

Sincerely,


Bill Johnson
Member of Congress


Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress


Mark Walker
Member of Congress


John Conyers
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer

Earl Blumenauer
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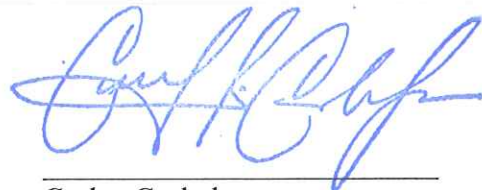
Jim McDermott

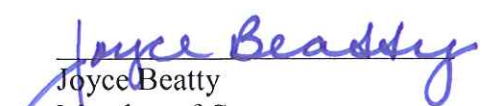
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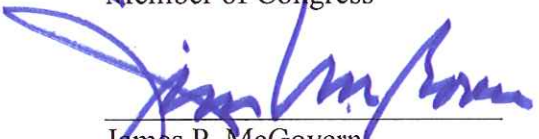

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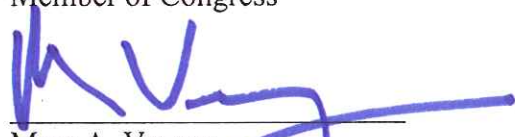

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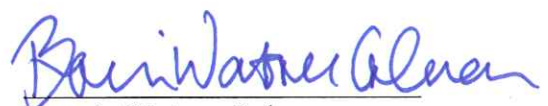

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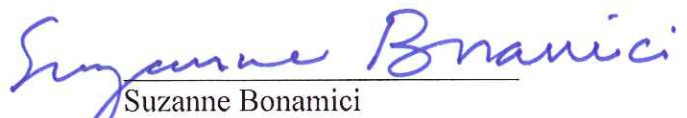

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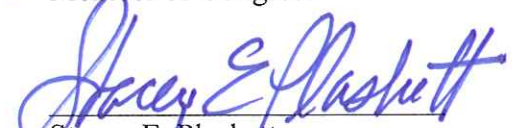

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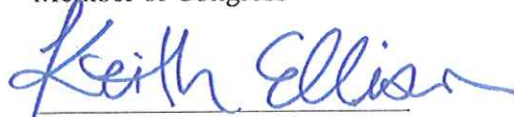
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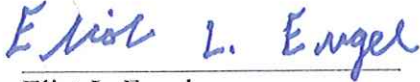
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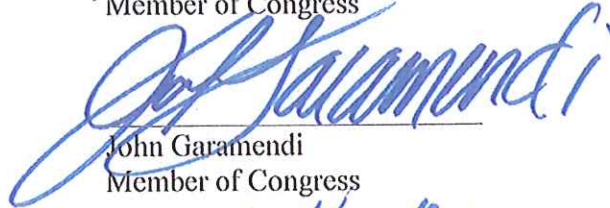
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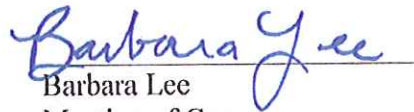
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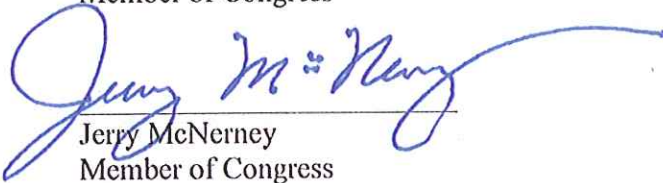
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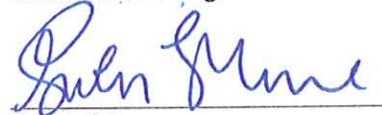
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Barbara Lee
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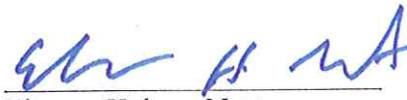
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Gwen Moore
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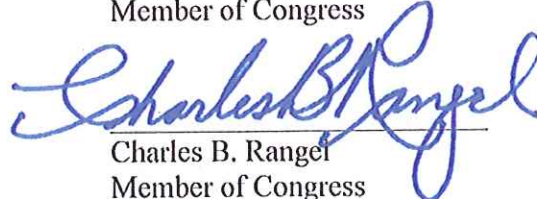
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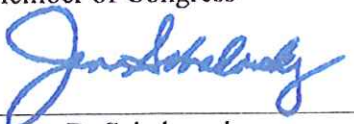
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Theodore E. Deutch
Member of Congress

Al Green
Member of Congress

Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress

Robert J. Dold
Member of Congress

ⁱ Stephanie Lee, Steve Aos, Elizabeth Drake, Annie Pennucci, Marna Miller, and Laurie Anderson, *Return on investment: Evidence-based options to improve statewide outcomes* (Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2012).

ⁱⁱ Nana A. Landenberger & Mark W. Lipsey, "The Positive Effects of Cognitive-Behavioral Programs for Offenders: A Meta-Analysis of Factors Associated with Effective Treatment," *The Journal of Experimental Criminology* 1 (2005): 451-476.

ⁱⁱⁱ Stephanie Lee, Steve Aos, Elizabeth Drake, Annie Pennucci, Marna Miller, and Laurie Anderson, *Return on investment: Evidence-based options to improve statewide outcomes* (Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2012); Marc Levin, *Adult Corrections Reform: Lower Crime, Lower Costs* (Austin: Texas Public Policy Foundation, 2011); Doug McVay, Vincent Schiraldi, and Jason

Ziedenberg, *Treatment or Incarceration? National and State Findings on the Efficacy and Cost Savings of Drug Treatment Versus Imprisonment* (Washington, D.C.: Justice Policy Institute, 2004); National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, *Crossing the Bridge: An Evaluation of the Drug Treatment Alternative-to-Prison (DTAP) Program* (New York: National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, 2003).

^{iv} National Institute on Drug Abuse, *Principles of Drug Abuse Treatment for Criminal Justice Populations: A Research-Based Guide*, 4th edition (Washington, D.C.: National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2012).

^v Jocelyn Fontaine, Caterina Gouvis Roman, and Martha R. Burt, *System Change Accomplishments of the Corporation for Supportive Housing's Returning Home Initiative* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute, 2010).

^{vi} Christy Visher, Sara Debus, and Jennifer Yahner, *Employment after Prison: A Longitudinal Study of Releasees in Three States* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute, 2008).

^{vii} Robert J. Sampson, and John H. Laub, *Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points Through Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

^{viii} Justice Policy Institute, *Education and Public Safety* (Washington, D.C.: Justice Policy Institute, 2007).

^{ix} Hide Yamatani, *The Program for Offenders: Comprehensive Evaluation and Cost/Benefit Analysis of a Community Corrections Facility* (Pittsburgh: Excellence Research, Inc., 2012).