

January 28, 2011

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chair, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
142 Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
123 Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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

The Honorable Chaka Fattah
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
1010 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Mikulski and Wolf and Ranking Members Shelby and Fattah:

We write to express our support for full funding of the Second Chance Act in fiscal year 2012. Our diverse organizations have come together because we represent constituencies working to increase public safety by improving reentry from prisons, jails, and juvenile facilities.

The Second Chance Act, which passed with overwhelming bipartisan support and was signed into law in April 2008, is a common sense, evidence-based approach to reducing crime and improving public safety. The bill authorizes \$165 million for programs that will improve coordination of reentry services and policies at the state, tribal, and local levels, including demonstration grants, reentry courts, family-centered programs, substance abuse treatment, employment, mentoring and other services needed to improve transition from prison and jail to communities and reduce recidivism.

The Second Chance Act will provide crucial resources at a time when they are desperately needed. In 2008, federal and state prisons held over 1.6 million inmates – one in every 198 U.S. residents – and released 735,000 individuals back to their communities. And more than 9 million individuals are released from jail each year. Unfortunately, most individuals face numerous challenges when returning to the community from prison or jail, and research indicates that over half are reincarcerated within three years of their release. In a recent report, The Pew Charitable Trusts estimated that, if current growth rates continue, state and federal prisons will grow by 13 percent by 2013, adding more than 192,000 prisoners at a cost of \$27.5 billion. According to the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics, jails are growing at an even faster pace. However, research confirms that comprehensive, coordinated services can help formerly incarcerated individuals find stable employment and housing, thereby reducing recidivism.

Over 250 Second Chance grants have been awarded to community and faith-based organizations as well as state, local and tribal governments spanning almost every state in the country. The Second Chance Act has fuelled the public/private partnerships that are required to tackle the complex task of reducing recidivism. To support grantees and the reentry field at-large as they face this challenge, the Second Chance Act also established the National Reentry Resource Center (NRRC). The NRRC helps organizations who have typically struggled to implement effective practice within a field long-deprived of the education, training, and technical assistance required to effectively enhance public safety.

By providing the resources needed to coordinate reentry services and policies, the Second Chance Act ensures that the tax dollars spent on corrections no longer support a revolving door in and out of prison and jail. State, tribal and local governments, and nonprofit organizations around the country are eager to launch and expand innovative reentry programs, and families and communities are desperate to access the services the Second Chance Act will provide.

Please support full funding for Second Chance Act programs in FY2012.

Sincerely,