

July 19, 2024

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Shaheen and Ranking Member Moran:

As the undersigned national, state, and local organizations, we would like to express our strong support for the Second Chance Act to continue being funded at the highest possible level in the FY 2025 Commerce Justice Science Appropriations bill.

We are a diverse set of organizations from a wide range of sectors including law enforcement, business leaders, faith groups, state and local government associations, direct service providers, experts in the field of substance use disorders and mental health, civil liberties groups, organizations representing people with lived experience, and more. As a collective, we are acutely aware of the necessity and value of strong reentry services for communities across the nation, with resources for housing, childcare, career training, and treatment for substance use disorders. Over 95% of the prison population will eventually be released,¹ and each year, more than 600,000 individuals are released from prison, while an even higher number enter and exit local jails.²

In 2008, the Second Chance Act was passed with bipartisan consensus and signed into law by President George W. Bush, aiming to address the reentry needs of the large population reentering our communities each year from a term of incarceration. Reentry programs under the Second Chance Act have served over 442,000 people since the law was enacted,³ through more than 1,100 Second Chance Act grants⁴ that were administered to 845 states, local and tribal governments, and reentry-focused non-profit organizations across the U.S. states, territories, and the District of Columbia.⁵

By bolstering reentry programs and services, the Second Chance Act builds stronger families and communities through helping individuals successfully reenter society upon release from

¹ Martin, E. & Garcia, M. (2022). Reentry Research at NIJ: Providing Robust Evidence for High-Stakes Decision-Making. *National Institute of Justice Journal*. <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/reentry-research-nij-providing-robust-evidence-high-stakes-decision-making>

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Incarceration & Reentry*. <https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/human-services/incarceration-reentry-0>

³ Ibid; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (2011-2020). *Second Chance Act Reentry Performance Reports*. <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/funding/grant-performance-measurement/performance-data-reports#10-0>

⁴ CSG Justice Center. (2023, April 25). *Congressional Briefing on The Second Chance Act: Advancing Successful Reentry and Public Safety* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gaq6rejYFCw>

⁵ National Reentry Resource Center. (2023). *Second Chance Month 2023: Opening Remarks from BJA Director Karhlton Moore*. https://nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/scm2023_openingRemarks_karhltonMoore.pdf

incarceration, thereby reducing recidivism rates and improving public safety. In the 15 years that the Second Chance Act has been in place, recidivism rates have dropped by 23% nationwide.⁶

Additionally, Second Chance Act grants have helped address the unique challenges of the continued substance use disorder and overdose crisis. With 65% of the prison population having a substance use disorder,⁷ and people released from prison being up to 129 times more likely to overdose within the first two weeks of release,⁸ Second Chance Act programs are urgently needed to provide communities with access to substance use disorder treatment, housing, employment, and other essential reentry services.

We are grateful for your longstanding commitment and leadership in ensuring that our communities are kept safe through responsible and smart initiatives, and we respectfully ask for your continued support of crucial Second Chance Act reentry programs in the FY 2025 Commerce Justice Science Appropriations bill.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

The Council of State Governments Justice Center
Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention (ASAP) Coalition
Alston Wilkes Society
America Forward
American Civil Liberties Union
American Correctional Association
American Probation and Parole Association
Addiction Policy Forum
Behavioral Health Foundation
Beyond the Pod
Big Thought
Boss Mode Recovery
Bridgeways
Cara Collective
CASES: Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Solutions
Center for Employment Opportunities
Center for Justice and Human Dignity
Center for Living and Learning
Challenge II Change
ChrysantheMoms Inc.
Circle For Support

⁶ CSG Justice Center. (2024). *50 States, 1 Goal: Examining State-Level Recidivism Trends in the Second Chance Act Era*. <https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/50-states-1-goal/>

⁷ National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2020). *Criminal Justice DrugFacts*. <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/drugfacts/criminal-justice#ref>

⁸ Binswanger, I. A., Nowels, C., Corsi, K. F., Glanz, J., Long, J., Booth, R. E., & Steiner, J. F. (2012). Return to drug use and overdose after release from prison: a qualitative study of risk and protective factors. *Addiction science & clinical practice*, 7(1), 3. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1940-0640-7-3>

Civil Citation Deflection & Diversion Network
Coalition on Human Needs
Concordance
CORJUS Inc.
Faces & Voices of Recovery
Florida Harm Reduction Collective
For The People
Forum for Youth Investment
Giving Others Dreams (GOD)
GreenLight Fund
Homeboy Industries
Hope House Treatment Centers
Illinois Coalition to End Permanent Punishment (ENDPP)
Indiana Recovery Network
International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium
International Coalition for Addiction Studies Education
International Community Justice Association
Jobs for the Future
Just Detention International
Landforce
Latino Ministers of New Jersey For Justice
Life Impacters Foundation
Major County Sheriffs of America
Montgomery County Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, Inc.
NACoA
National Association of Counties
National Association of Evangelicals
National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Behavioral Health Association of Providers
National Black Women's Justice Institute
National Council for Mental Wellbeing
National District Attorneys Association
National League of Cities
National Youth Justice Network
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies, Inc.
New Jersey Center For Empowerment and Community Development
New York State Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
Northern Valley Industries
North Lawndale Employment Network
Nyalenda Journey to Recovery
Ohio Community Corrections Association

Ohio Justice Alliance for Community Corrections
Oregon Council for Behavioral Health
Osborne Association
Power Forward
Prison Fellowship
Rebuilding Exchange
Rebuilding Independence My Style
REDF
Reentry Working Group
Repowered
Responsible Business Initiative for Justice
Rio Grande Alcoholism Treatment Program, Inc.
Safer Foundation
SHILO NJ (Supporting Homeless and Innovatively Loving Others)
Sycamores
TASC, Inc. (Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities)
The Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law
The Episcopal Church
The Gault Center
The International Community Justice Association (ICJA)
Today I Matter, Inc
Touch A Heart
Trumbull County Mental Health & Recovery Board
Uplift Northwest
Voices For A Second Chance
Weld Seattle
Youth First Justice Collaborative

CC:

The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Susan Collins, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations