



## **FEDERAL ADVOCACY ALERT**

**PLEASE ASK YOUR U.S. HOUSE REPRESENTATIVE AND U.S. SENATORS TO  
CO-SPONSOR AND URGE PASSAGE OF  
“THE SECOND CHANCE ACT OF 2007”**

### **What You Need to Know:**

The Second Chance Act, legislation that seeks to help States and localities better address the needs of individuals reentering the community from the criminal justice system, was reintroduced in the House of Representatives on March 20th and in the Senate on March 30th. Representative Danny Davis (D-IL) and 14 additional bi-partisan Members introduced the House version of the Second Chance Act, H.R. 1593, and Senators Joe Biden (D-DE), Arlen Specter (R-PA), Sam Brownback (R-KS), and Patrick Leahy (D-VT) introduced S. 1060, the Senate version of the Second Chance Act. On March 28th, the full House Judiciary Committee approved H.R. 1593 following a mark-up (review) of the legislation led by Second Chance Act sponsors Committee Chairman John Conyers (D-MI) and Ranking Member Lamar Smith (R-TX).

This legislation would provide grants to States and local areas to begin to address the need for drug and mental health treatment, job training and education opportunities, and housing, as well as other critical services for individuals when they return to the community. The Second Chance Act would also improve the reentry process by taking a critical first step towards reviewing and reversing the archaic and counter-productive Federal and State legal roadblocks that prevent successful reintegration of people with criminal records. *A summary of the Second Chance Act follows below.*

### **What You Need to Say:**

**“I am a constituent who lives in \_\_\_\_\_’s District/State and I would like to request that the Representative/Senator co-sponsor and urge passage of H.R. 1593/S.1060, the Second Chance Act of 2007. The Second Chance Act is important because it takes a critical first step towards helping formerly incarcerated individuals successfully reenter into the community. “**

### **What You Need to Do:**

Call, fax, or email your elected officials staff in Washington, D.C. In order to determine your Congressional member’s contact information in D.C. please visit: <http://capwiz.com/etp/dbq/officials>.

*Thank you for your help!*

## **Background: The Second Chance Act, H.R. 1593**

The Second Chance Act, legislation that seeks to help States and localities better address the needs of individuals reentering from the criminal justice system, was introduced by Congressman Danny Davis (D-IL) on March 20th. Members co-sponsoring the Second Chance Act include the leaders of the House Judiciary Committee, Chairman John Conyers (D-MI) and Ranking Member Lamar Smith (R-TX), and Representatives Stephanie Tubbs Jones (D-OH), Chris Cannon (R-UT), Bobby Scott (D-VA), Howard Coble (R-NC), Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX), James Sensenbrenner (R-WI), Steve Chabot (R-OH), J. Randy Forbes (R-VA), Elijah Cummings (D-MD), Yvette Clarke (D-NY), , Hank Johnson (D-GA), and Adam Schiff (D-CA).

The centerpiece of the Second Chance Act is the reauthorization of the Department of Justice's grant program for people returning to the community from incarceration. The Second Chance Act would provide grants to States and local areas to create or strengthen the systems that help adults and youth transition into the community when they are released from incarceration by providing drug and mental health treatment, job training and education opportunities, housing and other necessary services. The Second Chance Act would authorize \$65 million in appropriations for these grants each year for the next two fiscal years. The grants could be used for a wide range of services, including:

- Providing a full continuum of addiction treatment services including outpatient, comprehensive residential services, and recovery services to people reentering the community from prison, jail or a juvenile facility
- Expanding addiction treatment centers that offer family-based comprehensive treatment services for parents and their children as a complete family unit
- Providing or facilitating health care services, including substance abuse screening, treatment, and aftercare; infectious disease screening and treatment; and screening, assessment and aftercare for mental health services, to reentering individuals
- Assessing the literacy, educational, and vocational needs of people in the criminal justice system, and identifying and providing services appropriate to meet those needs, including follow-up assessments and long-term services
- Providing structured post-release housing and transitional housing, including group homes for individuals in recovery from substance use disorders
- Providing individuals with education, job training, English as a second language programs, and work experience programs
- Facilitating collaboration among corrections, including community corrections, technical schools, community colleges, businesses, nonprofit, and the workforce development and employment service sectors to:
  - Promote, where appropriate, the employment of people released from prison, jail, or a juvenile facility through efforts such as educating employers about existing financial incentives
  - Facilitate the creation of job opportunities, including transitional jobs and time-limited subsidized work experience where appropriate
  - Connect formerly incarcerated individuals to employment, including supportive employment and employment services before their release to the community, provide work supports including transportation and retention services, as appropriate, and identify labor market needs to ensure that education and training are appropriate, and
  - Address obstacles to employment that are not directly connected to the offense committed and the risk that the individual presents to the community and provide case management services as necessary to prepare individuals for jobs that offer the potential for advancement and growth

Additional key provisions of both versions of the Second Chance Act include:

- Requiring that States participating in the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) program for incarcerated people provide aftercare services
- Authorizing a grant program to States, local governments, Indian tribes and other public and private entities to evaluate methods to improve academic and vocational education for people in prison, jails and juvenile facilities; best practices for such educational programs would then be recommended to the Attorney General; \$5 million would be authorized for this program for each of two fiscal years
- Authorizing the Attorney General to make grants to States, local units of government and Indian tribes to establish technology careers training programs within prisons, jails and juvenile facilities; \$5 million would be authorized for this program for each of two fiscal years
- Authorizing a grant program to State and local prosecutors to develop and implement qualified drug treatment programs as alternatives to incarceration for individuals convicted of non-violent offenses
- Authorizing two grant programs to States, localities and Indian tribes to 1) develop, implement or expand comprehensive family-based addiction treatment programs as alternatives to incarceration for parents convicted of non-violent offenses and 2) to provide prison-based family treatment programs for incarcerated parents; \$10 million would be authorized for each of these grant programs for each of the 2008 and 2009 fiscal years
- Authorizing a grant program through the Department of Justice, in collaboration with the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), to States, localities, Indian tribes, and public and private organizations to establish pharmacological addiction treatment services as part of available drug treatment programs offered to people in prisons or jails; and a separate grant program through DOJ's National Institute of Justice, in consultation with NIDA, to evaluate the effectiveness of depot naltrexone for the treatment of heroin addiction; \$10 million would be authorized for each of the 2008 and 2009 fiscal years for these two programs
- Authorizing a grant program to "eligible partnerships" to create demonstration programs to reduce the use of alcohol and other drugs in prison or jail by people who were long-term users and to provide drug addiction treatment and recovery support services in the community; \$5 million would be authorized for the 2008 and 2009 fiscal years
- Requiring the Director of the Bureau of Prisons to:
  - Establish a comprehensive re-entry program
  - Assist incarcerated people in obtaining identification cards such as social security, driver's license and birth certificates, prior to release from incarceration
  - Provide pre-release planning procedures for incarcerated people to ensure eligibility for Federal and State benefits, such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, or Veterans benefits, upon release

Further information about the Second Chance Act, H.R. 1593/S. 1060, including the legislation's text, status, and co-sponsors can be found at: <http://thomas.loc.gov>.