

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 18, 2016

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chair, Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Commerce
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Mikulski:

Thank you for your continued leadership on reentry and recidivism issues, including support of the Second Chance Act. We are writing in support of continued funding for Second Chance Act programs in Fiscal Year 2017.

As you know, the Second Chance Act represents an important federal investment into evidence-based strategies to increase public safety and reduce recidivism. The legislation passed with bipartisan support in 2008 and authorizes funding for the development and coordination of critical reentry services, such as employment training, mentoring, and substance use disorder treatment. Second Chance Act programs are particularly important as many states continue to confront a prescription opioid abuse and heroin use crisis.

Investment in effective reentry programs is working. With more than 700 grants awarded in 49 states, Second Chance grantees have served more than 137,000 participants since 2009. Here are just a handful of examples of the innovative, evidence-based initiatives funded through the Second Chance Act that have helped lead to reductions in recidivism:

- **Alabama** officials have continued to fund the L.I.F.E. Tech Transition Center, which offers parolees substance use disorder and mental health treatment and cognitive behavioral interventions, all of which have contributed to the center's 89-percent success rate and low recidivism rate of **12.3 percent** at three years post-release. Six Second Chance grants have been awarded to agencies and nonprofit organizations in Alabama, including a recent grant to create a day reporting center in Birmingham to continue their efforts to reduce recidivism.
- **Maryland's** recidivism rate has dropped by **15 percent** in two years, from 47.8 percent for 2007 releases to 40.5 percent for 2009 releases. The state has received eight Second Chance grants, including an award to the Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation, which partners with its local community college and a workforce development organization to offer computer-based training and job placement assistance to individuals within 12 months of their release. Classes can range from basic computer skills to college courses in industry-accepted certificate programs. In addition,

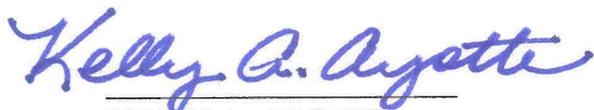
participants receive targeted reentry services, including substance use disorder treatment, housing, GED classes, and mentoring.

- **Texas** has seen a significant decline in recidivism of **28 percent** since 2000 by expanding the capacity of existing treatment programs and alternatives to incarceration, including transitional housing for parolees, in-prison treatment for substance use disorders, and outpatient substance use disorder treatment for people under probation supervision. Agencies and organizations in Texas have received a total of 28 Second Chance grants since 2009.
- In **Pennsylvania**, the Allegheny County 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**.

Lowering recidivism rates improves public safety and saves taxpayer dollars. Decreased recidivism represents thousands of averted crimes, as well as an important cost savings for states. A recent study found that community-based employment support and training has a benefit-to-cost ratio of \$40.76 returned for every \$1 spent; prison-based vocation education returned \$13.01 per \$1 spent, and cognitive-behavioral therapy for medium- and high-risk individuals returned \$23.55 per \$1 spent. To sustain these successes, continued investment in the Second Chance Act is essential.

By providing the resources needed to coordinate reentry services and policies at the state, tribal, and local level, the Second Chance Act ensures that the tax dollars spent on corrections do not simply fuel a revolving door in and out of prisons and jails. Please support FY2017 funding for the Second Chance Act.

Sincerely,



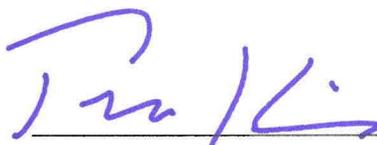
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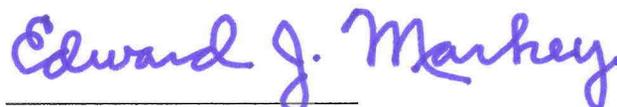
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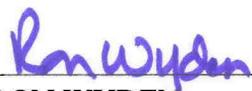
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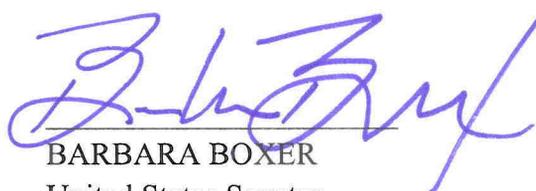
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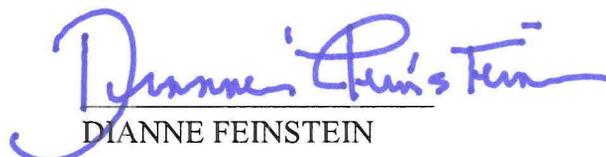
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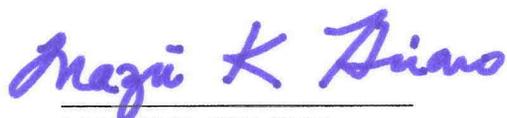
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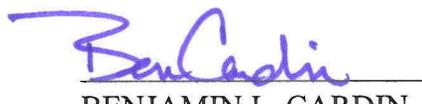
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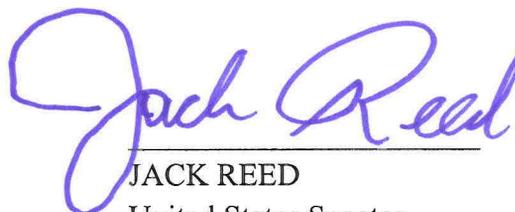
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