

## **The Second Chance Act** **2010 Information Packet**

This packet includes a brief description and update on the Second Chance Act ([P.L. 110-199](#)) and sample letters you can use to urge your members of Congress to fund the Second Chance Act.

### **Background**

The Second Chance Act is a common sense response to improve outcomes for people released from prisons, jails, and juveniles facilities and returning to our communities. Each year, more than 700,000 people are released from state prisons and approximately 9 million are released from jails. Approximately 100,000 youth under the age of 18 leave secure residential facilities, including juvenile facilities, jails and prisons, following adjudication. A 2002 study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics estimated more than two-thirds of individuals released from prisons in 1994 were rearrested for a new offense within three years and more than 50 percent returned to prison for committing new crimes or for violating their conditions of supervision. And at least 95 percent of the individuals now in prison will be released and will return to communities, often without assistance or services.

The Second Chance Act, which authorizes \$165 million in grants for state and local government and community organizations, was signed into law on April 9, 2008. In fiscal year 2009, \$25 million was available for Second Chance Act grant programs, and in fiscal year 2010, \$100 million is available.

President Obama has also requested \$100 million for Second Chance Act programs in fiscal year 2011, which begins on October 1, 2010. In order to ensure these desperately needed funds are available, members of Congress need to hear from their constituents that the Second Chance Act is a priority for them.

### **Take Action**

**Contact your Senators and Representative to ask them to support the Second Chance Act in FY2011.**

- To identify and send a message to your Senators, go to [http://www.senate.gov/general/contact\\_information/senators\\_cfm.cfm](http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm).
- To identify and send a message to your Representative, go to <https://writerep.house.gov/> and enter your ZIP Code.

### **Sample Letter:**

Dear Senator/Representative [INSERT NAME],

We write to ask that you support full funding for the Second Chance Act in fiscal year 2011. The Second Chance Act, which passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in April 2008, will help our communities better address the growing population of individuals returning from prisons, jails, and juvenile facilities.

The growth in the prison population is driven in part by the high rate of reincarceration of individuals with criminal records, whether due to the commission of new crimes or violations of probation or parole conditions. In 2008, 735,000 individuals were released from state and federal prisons, an increase of 20 percent from 2000. Research suggests that, without support, half will be reincarcerated within three years. 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. However, when individuals returning from prison are able to access the services they need to rebuild their lives – including education and job training, employment and housing services, substance abuse and mental health treatment, and mentoring programs – the families and communities they return to are stronger and safer.

**[Here in [INSERT STATE], <Insert local data or program work around reentry>.]**

By providing the resources needed to coordinate reentry services and policies at the state 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 prison. State and local governments around the country, as well as community and faith-based organizations, are excited to leverage federal funding to launch public-private reentry partnerships. Please make the Second Chance Act one of your priorities for FY 2011. If I can provide any more information about the program or the work we are doing in [INSERT STATE], please let me know.

*For more information about the Second Chance Act, email [scainfo@csg.org](mailto:scainfo@csg.org), or visit [http://www.reentrypolicy.org/government\\_affairs/second\\_chance\\_act](http://www.reentrypolicy.org/government_affairs/second_chance_act).*