



For Immediate Release

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**“Second Chance Act of 2004” re-entry bill will open the door to students**

**Overwhelming public support for eliminating the ban of federal financial aid to students with drug convictions**

Washington, DC (June 23, 2004) – Legislation introduced today in the U.S. House of Representatives would make it easier for students with drug convictions to obtain a college education. The bill, the “Second Chance Act of 2004,” includes a provision that will increase the availability of student aid as one of the key ways to address a skyrocketing recidivism rate among prisoners re-entering society after serving their time.

“We endorse this important first step that will increase the availability of aid to thousands of people, many of whom are in recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs, said Lisa Mojer-Torres, chair of Faces & Voices of Recovery. “Most Americans support changing the law and view the ban against student aid as a deterrent for people who are now trying to turn their lives around.” In a recent survey of the general public conducted for Faces & Voices of Recovery by Peter D. Hart Research Associates and Robert M. Teeter’s Coldwater Corporation, 63 percent of the respondents supported changing the law, with only 28 percent opposed.

In 1998, Congress amended the Higher Education Act to delay or deny federal financial aid to students with drug convictions. More than 140,000 students have been refused financial aid or have stopped applying for aid as a result of the test. The proposal introduced today would retain a ban on assistance to any student convicted of a drug offense while receiving financial aid for his or her higher education.

From April 19 to 22, 2004, Peter D. Hart Research Associates and Robert M. Teeter’s Coldwater Corporation conducted a national survey among 801 American adults for the Faces & Voices of Recovery campaign.

Faces & Voices of Recovery is working to mobilize, organize and rally the families, friends and allies of the millions of Americans in recovery from addiction in a campaign to: end discrimination; broaden social understanding; and achieve a just response to addiction as a public health crisis. For more information, please visit:

[www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org](http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org).