

Support House Bill 1704, the “Second Chance Act of 2005;”
Providing Increased Access to Substance Abuse Treatment, Job Training and
other Supportive Services to Reduce Recidivism, Strengthen Communities and
Increase Public Safety

The “Second Chance Act of 2005” would improve the reentry process by increasing access to substance abuse treatment services and aftercare, transitional and specialized housing, and supportive services such as job training and educational programs. It would take a critical first step towards reversing the archaic and counter-productive legal roadblocks that prevent successful reintegration of people with criminal records by limiting the ban on student loans for people with drug felony convictions and supporting a review of other Federal and State barriers that bar individuals with criminal records from having access to employment opportunities, welfare benefits and housing.

Key Provisions of the Second Chance Act

- **The Second Chance Act would give money to States to establish or improve the systems that assist adults and youth when they are released from incarceration and return to the community.** The money could be used for a wide range of services, including:
 - Carrying out programs and initiatives by units of local government to strengthen reentry services for individuals released from local jails
 - Providing structured post-release housing and transitional housing, including group homes for individuals in recovery from substance use disorders
 - Providing continuity of health services, including mental health services, substance abuse treatment and aftercare, and treatment for contagious diseases, to individuals in custody and after reentry into the community
 - Providing individuals with education, job training, English as a second language programs, work experience programs
 - Facilitating collaboration among corrections and community corrections, technical schools, community colleges, and the workforce development and employment service sectors to promote the employment of people released from prison and jail, and connect individuals to employment before their release to the community; and to address barriers to employment
 - Expanding treatment centers that offer family-based comprehensive treatment services for parents and their children as a complete family unit

- **The Second Chance Act would modify the ban on Federal financial aid for individuals with drug convictions** by clarifying that only individuals who receive a drug conviction while enrolled will lose their eligibility for the specified period of time as opposed to the current interpretation that denies aid to individuals with past, as well as current, drug convictions.

- **The Second Chance Act would establish an interagency task force on Federal programs and activities relating to the reentry of offenders into the community.** The task force will be responsible for issuing a report and recommendations to Congress on barriers to reentry, including:
 - Parental incarceration as a consideration for purposes of family reunification under the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997
 - Admissions in Federal housing programs
 - Child support obligations and procedures
 - Social Security benefits, Veterans benefits, food stamps, and other forms of Federal public assistance
 - Medicaid and Medicare procedures, requirements, regulations, and guidelines
 - Education programs, financial assistance, and civic participation
 - TANF program funding criteria and other welfare benefits
 - Employment

- **The Second Chance Act would provide \$15 million in grants to community-based organizations to provide mentoring and other transitional services to recently released adults and youth to assist them in their return to the community.**

Please urge your House of Representatives Member to support the Second Chance Act, because it takes a critical first step towards helping formerly incarcerated individuals successfully reenter the community.

For your Congressional Member's contact information visit: www.capwiz.com/etp/dbq/officials.

Thank you for your help!