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COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS

CHAIRMAN:
WORKER AND FAMILY SUPPORT

SUBCOMMITTEE:
TRADE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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Rep. Danny K. Davis CJS Approps Testimony

Thank you Chairman Serrano, Ranking Member Aderholt and Members of the CJS Appropriations Committee for hosting this opportunity for Members to advocate for critical programs. Today I will talk briefly about the Second Chance Act or SCA, a bill that I spent several years to work towards its passage. After several years of drafting, changes, advocacy, coalition building and sweat equity; the SCA was signed into law on April 9, 2008. The SCA authorizes federal grants for vitally important programs and systems aimed at improving the reentry process.

While the United States remains the most incarcerated nation on the face on the earth; housing around 2.2 million people in state prisons, federal prisons, jails and other correctional facilities; since the passage of the SCA, more than 900 grants in 49 states, DC and US territories and been awarded. These grants have served more than 164,000 participants since 2009, with roughly 80% of all adults served receiving mental illness, substance use disorder treatment and referrals, and 60% receiving cognitive-based services.

Not only has the SCA been a lifeline for the former offenders; it has been a small economic solution for many local and state governments thru investments in job training programs and wrap around services that significantly reduced recidivism; thereby creating new tax paying citizens. Organizations like the Safer Foundation in Chicago have provided job training, job placement and pathways to career opportunities for hundreds of men and women returning to severely low- income communities in Chicago. In addition, because of the SCA, as I travel across the country, I hear from small AND Fortune 500 companies boast about the reentry programs they have; or in the process of developing to provide additional training and employment opportunities for the formerly incarcerated.

Finally, the SCA is a true bipartisan success story. The first speech on the House floor I ever delivered about reentry was not well received. In fact, many Representatives questioned why advocate for those incarcerated, those that have wronged society, and why do we want these individuals back in the communities they once offended. Many citizens has the NIMY syndrome. Not.In.My.Back.Yard.

Yet, today, because of successful programs like the SCA, the Congress passed the First Step Act and are continuing to look at ways to reduce mass incarceration and sentencing reforms. Local governments, hospital systems and private employers are now making nominal investments in reentry. Success stories are being made every single day.

So, Mr. Chairman & Ranking Member, I am hopeful we can maintain the FY2020 funding level of \$90 million for the Second Chance Act and I am happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have.

Thank you – Congressman Danny K. Davis