



July 29, 2024

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chairman
Judiciary Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jim Jordan
Chairman
Judiciary Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Judiciary Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
Ranking Member
Judiciary Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Graham, Chairman Jordan, and Ranking Member Nadler:

We write on behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development and Catholic Charities USA to express our support for the Second Chance Reauthorization Act of 2024 (H.R. 8028 / S. 4477). The bill's efforts will enhance the reentry outcomes for individuals transitioning back into society following incarceration and supervision.

The bishops have long advocated for a system of restorative justice, as outlined in their 2000 pastoral letter [*Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice*](#), and our organizations [supported](#) the Second Chance Act of 2007 and [efforts at its reauthorization](#) in 2018.

Our organizations' collective dedication to advocating for individuals impacted by the justice system is firmly grounded in the Gospel and our Catholic faith. This doctrine espouses that every individual is created in the image and likeness of God and “possesses an infinite dignity, inalienably grounded in his or her very being, which prevails in and beyond every circumstance,

state, or situation the person may ever encounter.”¹ As a result, we strive to enhance programs and services for crime victims, individuals who have been charged with or convicted of a crime, and those seeking to reintegrate into society to empower them with the necessary support and resources to live a dignified life. Over 50 of the 168 Catholic Charities member agencies nationwide provide reentry services and support to individuals reintegrating into society and their support network, including financial literacy, job training, mental health and substance use counseling, housing services, mentoring, and much more.

Since the Second Chance Act was enacted 15 years ago, it has been a beacon of hope for hundreds of thousands of individuals involved in the justice system. The stabilizing services funded by Second Chance grant funds have transformed lives and significantly reduced recidivism rates nationwide. The Council for State Governments reported a 23% drop in state-level reincarceration rates over the past 15 years², a testament to the effectiveness of Second Chance initiatives in enhancing public safety and reducing crime.

The bipartisan support of these bills demonstrates the broad consensus on the need to improve programs that address the barriers faced by formerly incarcerated individuals and people with conviction histories in accessing basic services. Further, it underscores the importance of extending grace and affording impacted people the opportunity to rebuild and contribute to society.

We respectfully urge you and your colleagues to support the swift passage of the Second Chance Reauthorization Act before the end of the 118th legislative session. We stand ready to assist you in helping to advance this crucial step toward a more just and safe society.

Sincerely,



Most Rev. Borys Gudziak
Archbishop of Ukrainian Catholic
Archeparchy of Philadelphia
Chairman, Committee on Domestic
Justice and Human Development
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



Kerry Alys Robinson
CEO, Catholic Charities USA

¹ Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration “*Dignitas Infinita*” on Human Dignity (April 8, 2024), <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2024/04/08/240408c.html>.

² The Council of State Governments Justice Center, *50 States, 1 Goal: Examining State-Level Recidivism Trends in the Second Chance Act Era* (April 2024), <https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/50-states-1-goal/>.