

February 12, 2010

The Hon. Barbara Mikulski, Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, and Science
S-146A The Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510-6025

The Hon. Richard Shelby, Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, and Science
S-146A The Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510-6025

Dear Chair and Ranking Member:

On Behalf of Goodwill Industries International (Goodwill) and its 159 local Goodwill agencies in the United States, I wanted to thank you for your efforts to substantially increase FY 2010 funding for the Second Chance Act, and to urge you to provide funding for the Second Chance Act at its full authorization level – \$165 million in FY 2011.

Goodwill Industries believes that helping people with criminal backgrounds to attain and retain jobs is a key to reducing recidivism. Most local Goodwill agencies are helping an increasing number of people with criminal records to successfully reenter their communities through the dignity of work. In fact the number of ex-offenders served by local Goodwill agencies increased dramatically – from 45,000 to 105,000 – between 2005 and 2008. In addition, the U.S. Department of Justice recently awarded \$19.1 million youth mentoring grant to Goodwill Industries International from Recovery Act funds. As a result, 56 local Goodwill agencies in 38 states are enrolling youth in programs designed to break the cycle of recidivism by providing holistic supportive services in addition to mentoring.

An estimated 700,000 people will exit our nation's prisons this year. Unfortunately, research suggests that two-thirds will return to prison within three years. We believe that the Second Chance Act funds provided by the Recovery Act and FY 2010 appropriations will strengthen families and communities while increasing public safety. ***Therefore, Goodwill urges you to appropriate the full authorized amount for the Second Chance Act.***

Especially during such trying economic times, Goodwill understands the difficult challenge that appropriators face as they struggle to stretch limited resources to support an ever-increasing list of national priorities. We stand committed to working with you toward implementing solutions that will restore economic stability by empowering disadvantaged populations.

Thanks for considering this request. Please feel free to contact me at (240) 333-5202 or Seth Turner, Director of Government Affairs and Public Policy, at seth.turner@goodwill.org or (240) 333-5508.

Sincerely,



Jim Gibbons
President and CEO

cc:

House Commerce, Justice, and Science Subcommittee Members