

July 13, 2010

The Hon. David R. Obey, Chair  
House Appropriations Committee  
H- 218 Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Jerry Lewis, Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Lewis:

As you work to complete work on the FY 2011 Agriculture and Commerce, Justice, Science appropriations bills, I am writing on Behalf of Goodwill Industries International (Goodwill) and its 159 local Goodwill agencies in the United States to urge you to include funding for AgrAbility (Agriculture) and the Second Chance Act (Justice). These critical programs support local community-based efforts to help agricultural workers with disabilities and people with a criminal background to overcome their employment challenges. .

### **AgrAbility**

Goodwill has a long history in meeting the employment and training needs of people with disabilities who live and work in rural communities, including agriculture workers who have suffered disabling injuries and assisting people with criminal backgrounds to attain and retain jobs is a key to reducing recidivism.

As you may know, Agriculture consistently ranks as one of the nation's most dangerous occupations. Each year, 90,000 agricultural workers sustain disabling injuries in work-related accidents. AgrAbility is a small \$5 million program that consists of one National AgrAbility Project and more than 20 State/Regional AgrAbility Projects. These projects must involve a collaborative partnership between a land-grant university and one or more nonprofit organizations like Goodwill.

State AgrAbility projects provide free on-farm consultations during which they assess abilities and needs, make recommendations for farm site or task modifications and assistive technology, then develop an action plan that allows program participants to continue to lead successful careers in production agriculture and farming or in another chosen field. In addition, the National AgrAbility Project (lead by Purdue University in partnership with Goodwill Industries International) provides technical assistance and professional training for State AgrAbility Projects, produces resource materials, and disseminates information related to the project. This project is the cornerstone of Goodwill's efforts with rural communities.

***Goodwill, therefore, urges the House Appropriations Committee to provide \$6 million, the full authorized amount for the AgrAbility Program in FY 2011.***

### **Second Chance Act**

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. The majority of 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 more than 120,000 – between 2005 and 2009.

***Goodwill, therefore, urges the House Appropriations Committee to appropriate the full authorized amount of \$165 million for the Second Chance Act in FY 2011.***

We stand committed to working with you toward implementing solutions that will restore economic stability by empowering disadvantaged populations. Thanks for considering this request. Should you have questions, please feel free to contact Seth Turner, Director of Government Affairs and Public Policy, at [seth.turner@goodwill.org](mailto:seth.turner@goodwill.org) or (240) 333-5508.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Gibbons". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jim Gibbons  
President and CEO

CC:

Hon. Rosa DeLauro, Chair House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

Hon. Jack Kingston, Ranking Member House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

Hon. Alan Mollohan, Chair House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science

Hon. Frank Wolf, Ranking Member House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science

