



INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS ASSOCIATION

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA 2009

ICCA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

First Session of the 111th Congress

INTRODUCTION

The International Community Corrections Association was organized in 1964 as The International Halfway House Association. ICCA is a private, non-profit membership organization representing over 1,500 community corrections programs. ICCA member agencies operate community-based programs serving all stages of the corrections continuum for both juveniles and adults. ICCA members work in the private non-profit and corporate sectors as well as at all levels of government.

The mission of community corrections is to protect and enhance public safety through recidivism reduction; supervise offenders in community-based settings that are in close proximity to the homes of the clients and families being served; permit offenders to work and participate in needed treatment services; and provide opportunities for positive behavioral change in themselves and their families.

At present, the United States incarcerates its citizens at a higher rate than any other nation in the world. 2.7 million Americans are currently in prison; since 95% of offenders eventually serve out their sentences and return to society, there are now 670,000 prisoners reentering their home communities every year. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (December, 2007), one in every 100 adults in the United States was either under supervision, in prison or jail in 2006.

The First Session of the 111th Congress is deliberating important criminal justice reform legislation and debating competing priorities for limited resources in a time of economic distress. This document conveys our positions on top issues expected to be debated in this Congress.

Following are the critical legislative goals of the International Community Corrections Association for the 111th Congress.

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

- Secure adequate appropriations to support the programs of The Second Chance Act and the development of regulations supportive of its intent to reduce recidivism and increase public safety through jobs, housing, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and strengthening families for prisoners reentering society. The Second Chance Act was signed into law in April, 2008.
- Support additional bills that strengthen pre-release transitional programming for inmates, service coordination upon release, and post-release housing, employment and education services.
- Improve the capacity and utilization of community corrections through statutes and regulations that maximize the use of community corrections resources and minimize costly jail and prison use for non-violent offenders.
- Improve the effectiveness of community corrections through statutes and regulations, accreditation and standards that require delivery of appropriate services to achieve specific performance outcomes related to reduced recidivism.

BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS

- Ensure that budget instructions do not restrict services to offenders in need of transitional programs in housing, employment or education in order to achieve a balanced budget.
- Enact sufficient funding to: support prisoner reentry initiatives; sustain a comprehensive, balanced approach to managing delinquency, and the prevention of youth crime; support the continuum of care for youthful offenders; and serve the needs of crime victims.
- Enact sufficient funding to support research in community corrections, juvenile justice, restorative justice, and prisoner reentry initiatives.

- Support the restoration of full funding for the critically important work of the National Institute on Corrections (NIC) in research, technical assistance, policy development, networking and training.
- Support full funding of the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program for FY 2010 at \$1.1 billion

REVENUE AND TAX POLICY

- Assure federal revenues necessary to protect the public safety through adequate support of corrections programs.
- Assure the continued viability of non-profit organizations.

JUVENILE JUSTICE

- Support legislation that requires specialized programs for children and youth completely apart from adult offenders, and oppose legislation that would prosecute and punish minors as adults, as brain development research has provided evidence that we should examine this practice.
- Support legislation eliminating the practice of sentencing children to life without parole.
- Advocate reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act in accordance with principles promoting prevention; ensuring equity, competence, and developmental appropriateness; and strengthening the federal partnership with the states.
- Support legislation promoting prevention efforts that reduce youth violence and delinquency, specifically, the Youth PROMISE Act, H.R. 1064 introduced by Representative Bobby Scott and its companion bill, S. 435 introduced by Senator Robert Casey.

MENTAL ILLNESS

- Promote full funding for the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Reauthorization and Improvement Act of 2007 which addresses law enforcement response, alternative sentencing through mental health courts, effective treatment, mentors and more.

VICTIMS OF CRIME/RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

- Advocate for the development of programs in which offenders provide restitution to victims, compensation and service to the community, and are held financially responsible for their crimes.
- Support legislation that: provides for the active participation of victims in the justice system process; educates victims and victim service agencies on correctional practices, and involve correctional staff in victim advocacy activities; and trains criminal justice officials on victim program services, impact on crime victims, and sensitivity to victims' rights.

SENTENCING REFORM

- Support legislation that promotes the use of the most effective criminal sanctions to protect public safety, administer punishment to the offender and rehabilitate the offender, by basing sentences on an offender's risk and needs as supported by evidence-based practices and research.
- Support legislation that provides alternatives to incarceration and conviction for less serious and appropriate offenders, such as deferred prosecution programs and therapeutic courts (drug courts, mental health courts, etc.).
- Support legislation eliminating discrepancies between the treatment of possession of crack and possession of other forms of cocaine.
- Support efforts to comprehensively review the overall policies and practices of the U.S. criminal justice system, as proposed by Senator James Webb.

BARRIERS TO OFFENDER REENTRY

- Support legislation that reduces restrictions on eligibility for previously incarcerated individuals in housing, educational assistance and employment.

RESEARCH

- Support legislation that promotes new research and program evaluation requirements in community corrections.

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