

June 22, 2015

Senator Rob Portman
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Patrick Leahy
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Kelly Ayotte
144 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Marco Rubio
284 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Portman, Leahy, Ayotte and Rubio:

On behalf of the National PTA and our three and a half million members who are parents, teachers, students, and other child advocates, we are writing to express our strong support for the bipartisan Second Chance Reauthorization Act (S. 1513). Since its founding in 1897, the PTA has provided parents and families with a powerful voice to speak on behalf of every child, and the best tools to help their children be safe, healthy and successful in school and in life.

Young people already have benefited greatly from this law since its original passage in 2008 through mentoring and other supportive reentry services, as well as support for critical research on best youth reentry practices. In particular, we are happy to see the following provisions in the bill that will help improve reentry for young people nationwide:

- Identification and implementation of best practices in academic and vocational education, including for young people in juvenile justice facilities.
- Expanding award eligibility for career training grants to include nonprofit organizations and opening the program to include non-technology career training as a way to expand workforce preparation for a range of employment sectors, including those appropriate for older youth.
- Authorization and expansion of mentoring programs to consist of transitional services, including services that are key to successful youth reentry, such as education and vocational services, appropriate housing, family services, medical and behavioral health care.
- Priority consideration for state and local demonstration grant applications that: 1) consult the regional juvenile justice coordinating council when appropriate, 2) gather input from young people reentering from the juvenile justice system, 3) provide pre-

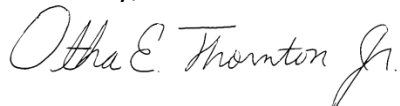
release planning for transitional housing and community release upon entry into a juvenile justice facility, or 4) provide pre-release planning to ensure eligibility for various federal or state benefits upon release and that secure all necessary referrals for reentry services.

- Codification of the Department of Justice's Reentry Task Force, which has included an important focus on youth reentry in its work.

Without careful planning, young people often return to neighborhoods with few supportive programs, poverty and poor performing schools. To improve public safety and reduce recidivism, young people need ready access to effective reentry services, such as safe housing and appropriate educational programming. Young people have specific needs and we applaud you for continuing to improve reentry services that help to achieve key goals such as school reenrollment, family reunification, mastery of independent life skills, and attachment to pro-social peers. Access to effective reentry services that promote such achievement greatly improves the likelihood that young people will have successful, law-abiding and productive lives.

Thank you again for your vision and leadership on these important issues that impact communities and families nationwide. We look forward to working with you to ensure the continuation of effective youth reentry programs through the reauthorization of the *Second Chance Act*.

Sincerely,



Dr. Otha Thornton
President
National PTA



Nathan Monell
Executive Director
National PTA