



CONGRESSMAN ALAN B. MOLLOHAN, CHAIRMAN

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE & RELATED AGENCIES

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Opening Statement of Chairman Alan B. Mollohan
Offender Drug Abuse Treatment Approaches

For our last hearing of the day, we welcome Dr. Faye Taxman, Professor in the Administration of Justice Department at George Mason University. Dr. Taxman has expertise in the broad range of prisoner reentry issues we will be discussing between today and Thursday, but we have asked her to focus here this afternoon on what is perhaps the most critical challenge facing many offenders who reenter our communities: substance abuse. Forty percent of inmates entering Federal prisons have a drug use disorder and require residential drug abuse treatment.

Over the last several decades, our society's approach to dealing with criminal offenders has been in flux. Beginning in the 1970s, the criminal justice system at the Federal and State levels began to focus more on punishment than rehabilitation, due in large part to a rising crime rate and research showing that rehabilitation programs were having little effect on recidivism. In the late 1980s, states began imposing mandatory minimum sentences and "three-strikes" laws that increase the period of time an offender is likely to serve.

But the population of State and Federal prisons has increased significantly. Between 1995 and 2005, the number of people imprisoned in the United States grew by approximately 3 percent per year, compared with an overall population growth rate of 1 percent. Add to that the fact that the cost of incarcerating an adult is approaching \$29,000 per year, which is greater than the cost of almost any treatment program or other prison alternative. As a result, many States and the Federal government have been implementing new prisoner rehabilitation initiatives as a tool for reducing recidivism. Last year's enactment of the *Second Chance Act* was testament to that change in thinking.

We have begun to understand that offenders are much more successful in reentering their communities from prison if they have comprehensive, coordinated supports and services, and that society is better off – in terms of reduced crime and cost – when that happens. What prevents many offenders from successfully reentering their communities is drug addiction. Addiction is a powerful need, and addicts are unlikely to be able to make the right choices

unless we help them deal with that addiction through drug treatment programs, counseling, and other supports.

Dr. Taxman, in a moment I will ask you to briefly summarize your written testimony. But first, I want to turn to Mr. Wolf for his opening comments.