

## The CORRECTIONS Act (S. 467)

*Senators John Cornyn (R-TX) and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)*

*States across the country have shown that it is possible to cut prison costs while better protecting the public by focusing corrections resources on those offenders who are most likely to commit future crimes and by expanding programs that have been proven to reduce recidivism. The CORRECTIONS Act (Corrections Oversight, Recidivism Reduction, and Eliminating Costs for Taxpayers In Our National System) is bipartisan legislation sponsored by John Cornyn (R-TX) and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) that works to implement many of these successful state reforms at the federal level. The bill is based on legislation that passed the Judiciary Committee by a vote of 15-2 last year.*

- **Risk Assessment:** The bill requires the Department of Justice to develop a risk assessment tool that will assess the recidivism risk of federal inmates. States and the federal probation system have implemented risk assessment tools that have proven successful in predicting inmates' risk of recidivism.
- **Expanded Recidivism-Reduction Programming:** The bill requires the Bureau of Prisons to provide evidence-based recidivism reduction programming to virtually all federal inmates, which can include substance abuse treatment, vocational training, educational programs, cognitive behavioral treatment, and prison employment.
- **Partnerships with Faith-Based and Community-Based Organizations:** In order to promote efficient and effective recidivism reduction programming, the Bureau of Prisons must enter into partnerships with non-profit and private organizations to enhance existing efforts and deliver a broad spectrum of programming to prisoners.
- **Credit toward Prerelease Custody:** As an incentive for inmates to reduce their risk of committing future crimes, the bill allows inmates who successfully complete recidivism reduction programs to earn credit toward time in prerelease custody, which can include halfway houses, home confinement, or community supervision. Certain categories of inmates (including violent offenders, sex offenders, terrorists, drug kingpins, and major white-collar criminals, as well as those with particularly extensive criminal records) are not eligible.
- **Improving Prisoner Reentry:** The bill requires the federal probation office to begin planning for an inmate's reentry at the beginning of the inmate's sentence, and it requires the Justice Department to implement reentry pilot projects across the country. The bill also requires DOJ to study the impact of prisoner reentry on communities that support large numbers of ex-offenders and creates a new pilot program for ex-offenders in supervised release, based on Hawaii's successful HOPE program.
- **Reducing Prison Spending:** At a cost of \$29,000 per inmate, the Bureau of Prisons now spends nearly \$7 billion each year, a 20-fold increase since 1980. Rising prison costs crowd out other law-enforcement priorities, including federal support for state and local law enforcement. By focusing resources on those offenders who are most likely to commit future crimes and allowing lower-risk inmates to serve their sentences in less restrictive conditions, the bill will help to reduce prison costs and free up resources for other programs.

*Cosponsors: Sens. Cornyn (R-TX), Whitehouse (D-RI), Lee (R-UT), Blumenthal (D-CT), Hatch (R-UT), Coons (D-DE), Graham (R-SC), Schumer (D-NY), Rubio (R-FL), and Franken (D-MN).*