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NACo applauds bipartisan, bicameral effort
to reauthorize Second Chance Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Counties (NACo) today applauded bipartisan, bicameral efforts to reauthorize legislation which aims to reduce jail and prison costs to taxpayers and improve public safety.

First enacted in 2008, the Second Chance Act provides federal, state and local governments additional tools necessary to help incarcerated individuals more successfully reintegrate into their communities upon release and avoid reoffending.

The bipartisan Second Chance Reauthorization Act of 2013 improves and consolidates the programs authorized by the 2008 Second Chance Act, but reauthorizes them at reduced levels to better reflect current appropriations. The reauthorization was introduced by Sens. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Reps. Jim Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.), Danny Davis (D-Ill.), Howard Coble (R-N.C.), Bobby Scott (D-Va.), Spencer Bachus (R-Ala.), Marcia Fudge (D-Ohio) and Steve Chabot (R-Ohio).

During a Capitol Hill briefing on Nov. 13, organized by the Council of State Governments (CSG), NACo Executive Director Matthew D. Chase said reentry – local programs to assist incarcerated individuals to successfully reintegrate into their communities upon release – is a pressing issue for county leaders around the country.

“Sheriffs and jail administrators have embraced reentry programs as part of their public safety mission and have worked with researchers to adapt evidence-based practices like risk assessment and case management to suit the complexity of the local jail setting,” Chase said. “Laws such as the Second Chance Act bring us closer to the best days of intergovernmental relations with model cooperation of federal, state and local officials.”

Chase noted that counties own 2,657 jails and spend $70.2 billion each year on public safety and justice services and that the Second Chance Act has provided more than $90 million to counties to explore and test common-sense, evidence-based approaches to reducing crime and improving public safety.
According to the U. S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, there are more than 13 million admissions and releases annually to county jails each year, involving about 7 million to 10 million individuals. Many of these individuals cycling in and out of county jail have mental illness issues or substance abuse issues.


The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo assists America’s 3,069 counties in pursuing excellence in public service to produce healthy, vibrant, safe and resilient counties. NACo promotes sound public policies, fosters county solutions and innovation, promotes intergovernmental and public-private collaboration and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money.