

REAUTHORIZE THE MENTALLY ILL OFFENDER TREATMENT AND CRIME REDUCTION ACT

ACTION NEEDED: Urge your Members of Congress to support and cosponsor the bicameral Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act (H.R. 401, S. 162), which reauthorizes for five years the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA) program set to expire in September 2013.

BACKGROUND: Enacted by Congress in 2004, the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA) authorized a \$50 million grant program to be administered by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). The grants, which are available to state, tribal and local governments, may be used to develop and implement a variety of programs designed to improve outcomes for individuals with mental illness involved in the criminal justice system.

MIOTCRA also created the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCPC), which helps states and counties design and implement collaborative efforts between criminal justice and mental health systems. Collectively, state and local governments use these grants for a broad range of activities, including establishing jail diversion programs, mental health courts, creating or expanding community-based treatment programs or providing in-jail treatment and transitional services. In addition, grant funds may be used to enhance training for criminal justice and mental health system personnel who must know how to respond appropriately to this population.

In 2008, Congress reauthorized the MIOTCRA program at \$50 million from 2008 to 2013. However, Congressional appropriators have never fully funded the program and only provided \$9 million for the program in FY2012. In March, Congress passed the FY2013 Continuing Resolution (CR) which funded MIOTCRA through September, 2013 at \$8.83 million.

On January 23, 2013, the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act (H.R. 401) was introduced in the House by Rep. Richard Nugent (R-Fla.); it now has 27 co-sponsors. This bipartisan legislation reauthorizes the Mentally Ill Offender and Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA) and its current program areas for an additional five years. Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) introduced a companion bill (S. 162) in the Senate on January 28, 2013 and is joined by a bipartisan mix of 27 cosponsors. MIOTCRA effectiveness is well documented and is supported in a rare bipartisan fashion by many Members of Congress.

QUICK FACTS

- Currently, there are over 2 million people incarcerated in U.S. prisons or jails and over 10 million people are booked into U.S. jails over the course of the year
- The nation's local jails are increasingly becoming the dumping grounds for the mentally ill. In fact, it is estimated that 24 percent of people booked in local jails display a pattern of symptoms that are indicative of behavioral health disorders
- Per capita aggregate federal, state and local corrections spending has increased by over 400 percent since 1982

KEY TALKING POINTS:

- The nation's local jails are increasingly becoming the dumping grounds for the mentally ill. Of the 10 million people entering county jails each year, it is estimated that 24 percent are displaying a pattern of symptoms that are indicative of behavioral health disorders. Most persons with behavioral health disorders incarcerated or detained in county jails have committed only minor infractions, which are more often the manifestation of their illness than the result of criminal intent.
- Congress authorized a program to provide assistance to this population in 2004, called the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA) administered by the U.S. Department of Justice to develop and implement a variety of programs designed to improve outcomes for individuals with mental illness involved in the criminal justice system. MIOTCRA provides assistance to states and communities to create new programs or expand existing programs that can both reduce costs and help mentally ill offenders return to productive lives.
- Rep. Richard Nugent (R-Fla.), along with a bipartisan mix of 9 original cosponsors, introduced the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act (H.R. 401), which reauthorizes MIOTCRA and its current program areas for an additional 5 years. Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) and a bipartisan mix of 22 Senators, introduced companion legislation (S. 162) of the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act in the Senate.
- The MIOTCRA program is set to expire in September 2013, and NACo encourages members to contact their Members of Congress, and urge them to support the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act sponsored by Rep. Nugent and Sen. Franken.

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