

**Mr. SCOTT of Virginia:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois for scheduling this special order on the Second Chance Act and for his long and diligent labors to move the bill forward as part of his lifetime of dedication to protecting and serving the public's interest.

He has been a dedicated public servant on this issue, ensuring that those who are in prison have a chance to turn their lives around and become productive citizens. That is why he is the chief sponsor of the Second Chance Act.

Congressman *Davis'* efforts not only benefit the offenders, because for everyone who comes out and establishes a law-abiding and productive life, one or more potential victims of crime never become victims, and the taxpayers have to pay less in prison expenses because one less person is not going back to prison.

This is the third Congress in a row that we have been working on this bill on a bipartisan basis. I believe this year we will be successful in passing the bill.

Madam Speaker, over the last decade we have seen an unprecedented explosion in our prison and jail populations. Now there are more than 2.2 million people incarcerated in Federal and State prisons and local jails, a tenfold increase since just 1980. Moreover, the annual expenses for corrections have increased from \$9 billion in 1982 to more than \$65 billion today. The figures continue to grow. These figures do not include the cost of arrest and prosecution, nor do they take into account the cost to victims of crime.

As a result of this focus in incarceration, the United States leads the world in per capita incarceration rates. The United States locks up 726 inmates for every 100,000 in population, according to 2004 data.

The international average is about 100 per 100,000. 142 in England and Wales, 117 in Australia, 116 in Canada, 91 in Germany, 85 in France. So the United States average is more than seven times the international average of about 100 per 100,000. The closest competitor is

532 inmates per 100,000 in Russia. That is 726 in the United States, Russia, second place, 532 per 100,000.

This year, more than 650,000 people will be released from State and Federal prisons to communities nationwide, along with more than 9 million people leaving our local jails. According to the Department of Justice, 67 percent of offenders leaving State and Federal prison will be rearrested within the next 3 years.

There is a pressing need to provide ex-offenders with education and training, drug treatment and medical and mental health services necessary to afford them the ability to obtain and hold steady jobs.

The statistics underlying the needs of our prison population are staggering. For example, 57 percent of Federal and 70 percent of State inmates used drugs regularly before prison, with some estimates going as high as 84 percent of alcohol or drug use at the time the offense occurred.

Furthermore, one-third of all jail inmates will have some physical or mental disability. Twenty-five percent of jail inmates in fact have been treated at some time for mental or emotional problems. And as has been detailed by many researchers, other deficiencies include limited education and few job skills or job experience.

Evidence from the Department of Justice indicates that the needs for prison population are not being met under the current system. If we allow them to return to their communities with few economic opportunities where they were actually involved in crime and where their friends and associates may still be involved in crime and substance abuse, if we allow them to return to those communities without support, we can only expect to see the extension of the cycle of recidivism.

With bipartisan support in this legislation, we are set to build a broad web of programs which will help break the cycle of recidivism laying at the heart of our prison population explosion. The Second Chance Act provides a host of evidence-based approaches designed to reduce the high rate of recidivism that we are now experiencing.

If we are going to continue to send more and more people to prison with longer and longer sentences, we should do as much as we reasonably can to assure that when they do return to their communities, they don't turn around and commit new offenses and have to go back to prison.

Madam Speaker, let's be clear: The primary reason for supporting the Second Chance Act is not to benefit the offenders, although it does benefit the offenders. The primary reason for doing so is it better assures us that we and other Members of the community will not be victims of crime in the future and because the taxpayer will have to pay less in services under the Second Chance Act than we now have to pay because of the high recidivism rate and having people go back to prison.

So I want to thank again the gentleman from Illinois for holding this special order to bring attention to this important issue and the legislation that has been carefully drawn up to address it. I thank Mr. *Davis* for being the chief sponsor of the Second Chance Act. We are going to work as hard as we can to make sure it passes the House and the Senate.