February 26, 2018  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510  

Dear Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Feinstein, and Committee Members,  

On behalf of the Office of Justice and Ecology of the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States, I write you today to encourage you to introduce a companion bill to HR. 2899, the Second Chance Reauthorization Act of 2017 in the Senate.  

Every year almost 640,000 men, women, and juveniles re-enter society after they serve their sentences in federal and state prisons. An additional nine million individuals will be released from local jails and detention centers. The bipartisan Second Chance Act of 2008 addressed many of the challenges individuals re-entering society face following incarceration. Based on our experiences of serving individuals in prison and as they attempt to re-enter society, we believe Congress must do more to ensure as many people as possible are equipped with the tools to return home.  

The Second Chance Act provides much needed financial assistance to federal, state, and local agencies to help them reintegrate individuals returning from prison. Second Chance Act funds have assisted non-profits in providing mentoring and transitional services and have created a national resource center for local governments, service providers, corrections officers, and faith-based and community organizations to share best practices. The legislation also provided grants to expand family-based treatment centers that offer comprehensive services for both parents and children.  

We believe that prioritizing funding for re-entry services is not only the moral choice, it is the fiscally smart choice. By investing in the successful reintegration of returning citizens, our nation can save money through programs that have proven track records on reducing recidivism rates. Through our many ministries working firsthand with our brothers and sisters returning from prison, we see their potential and know their struggles.  

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops reminds us that “none of us is the sum total of the worst act we have ever committed,” even in those whose actions we find hard to forgive. We urge you to reauthorize this vital program that offers a helping hand and a second chance to those who need it most.  

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.  

Sincerely,  

Rev. Jean Denis Saint-Félix, SJ  
Secretary  
Office of Justice and Ecology  
Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States