This is particularly true in low-income communities, or commits another crime and ends up back in prison. Rep. The ex-offender assimilates successfully back into the community because they can be determining factors as to whether or not increasing number of offenders also have mental health problems. Fifty-seven percent of federal and 70 percent of state prisoners released have the capacity to absorb their returning residents and to keep jails to return to the communities they left behind, released a report on the subject in the Washington Post. The report asserts: “At least 47 percent of those released are not just individuals, but whole communities, as they have a duty of care to absorb their returning residents and to keep neighborhoods whole.”

Two environmental issues in particular deserve further attention, as they have the potential to help address reentry problems. These are the issues of the availability of alcohol and drug treatment, and the number of outlets in a neighborhood where alcohol cannot be purchased.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment Can Improve Chances

Substance abuse is a significant problem for ex-offenders, with some 70 to 82 percent having some history of alcohol or other drug abuse problem. Fifty-seven percent of federal and 70 percent of state inmates were regular drug users before prison. Alcohol is the leading drug of abuse among prisoners. Addressing these issues successfully is critically important because they are the determining factors as to whether or not the ex-offenders assimilates successfully back into the community, or commits another crime and ends up back in prison. Rep. Portman asserts that if treatment is not sought or not available upon release, then some kind of relapse is in order. These relapses can often mean more crimes committed by already vulnerable families and communities.

Alcohol Density: A Critical Factor

There are several ways to help prevent substance abuse for ex-offenders. The answers involve a combination of approaches. Making treatment more readily available is one important aspect of this. It is addressed in both the Second Chances legislation as well as the Bush-Administration’s Offender Reentry Initiative. Another significant factor is the environment, and looking at ways to make alcohol less readily available.

When offenders are released from prison or jail, they most often return to their former neighborhoods. For ex-offenders who were substance abusers, this can often contribute to their downfall. Many ex-offenders have found that, after former incarceration, they turned to the streets to buy alcohol to sell. This is particularly true in low-income neighborhoods. Where alcohol is more readily available, such as areas with greater outlet density, more drinking usually occurs and hence there is a greater likelihood that ex-offenders will not be rehoused. We must recognize, even with limited research, “The sheer volume of outlets complicates recovery for individuals seeking to address their alcoholism or alcohol influenced behaviors. Many alcohol resident in these neighborhoods offer discount prices and promotions that encourage consumption or easy access to the product.”

• One study found that a city of 50,000 residents in Los Angeles County with 150 alcohol outlets would experience an additional 3.4 assaults and 2.7 motor vehicle crashes per year if one new alcohol outlet opened.

• A study of Newark, New Jersey, found that areas of the city with higher alcohol outlet density had higher rates of violent crime. They also found that the alcohol outlet density rate was the single most important environmental factor explaining why violent crime rates were higher in certain areas of the city than others.

• A 1998 study of urban residential neighborhoods in New Jersey, using data from 1980 to 1995, found that the more off-premises alcohol outlets a neighborhood had, the more likely it is to have higher rates of on-premise alcohol outlet.

• A study of 58 states and the District of Columbia found that there were higher alcohol outlet rates in states that had higher rates of on-premise alcohol outlet.

There are at least two theories that help explain the relationship between outlet density and violence. One says that the alcohol itself leaves passions inflamed and encourages violent actions and intentions. The second theory is that it is the outlets themselves that define an environment in which social norms and external controls are weakened, making people in close proximity more likely to participate in activities which are illegal, dangerous, or violent. The issue has serious implications for the offender, their families, their communities, so to mention government budgets. However, the solution to the problem is not just for ex-offenders and their communities, it makes it worth it at least to reduce the number and availability of alcohol outlets as a way to reduce crime and violence.

For additional information about the International Institute for Alcohol Awareness contact James E. Copple, Director, at either 301-755-2783 or jcopple@pire.org.
Reentry Policies are the Key to Success

Facts About State Prisoners Released Annually:

- 1 in 4 has a criminal conviction for a violent offense
- 1 of 2 has had a violent offense conviction in his lifetime
- 3 of 4 have a substance abuse problem
- 2 of 3 will be reared within 3 years
- 55 percent have minor children, half of whom are under 10 years of age

Reentry programs help to break the cycle of crime and violence. They provide support and services for families and children of inmates and help prevent children from joining the prison population. In addition, states have made significant investments in reentry programs, including funding for reentry initiatives, mentoring, job training, and treatment. These efforts have been successful in reducing recidivism rates and improving outcomes for former prisoners.

We know from long experience that it is possible to change lives and break the cycle of crime and violence. The community is the key to success. We need to be both tough and smart on crime. We need to address the underlying causes of crime and violence and provide support and services for families and children of inmates.

Key to Success

Reentry Policies are the Key to Success

Getting 'A Second Chance'

Several bills designed to address the myriad of re-entry offenders' problems were introduced in state and federal legislatures in 2003 and are expected to be considered strongly in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. Sponsored by Rep. Rob Portman (R-OH), the Second Chance Act (S. 2789 and H.R. 4676 in the last Congress), the Act is designed to reduce recidivism, crime, increase public safety, and help states and communities with grants to them to address the growing populations of prisoners returning to their communities and plan for their re-entry. The initiative provides help and direction in jobs, housing, substance abuse treatment, and mental health, and other services for families and children of inmates.

Benefits of Successful Reentry Programs

- Protects those who might otherwise be victimized by ex-offenders who commit new crimes.
- Improves the likelihood that the ex-offender can find work, family, and family support.
- Reduces the need to spend future funds on police, courts, prisons, and parole.
- Repays community efforts to reduce access to alcohol.
- Ameliorate factors that place inmates at higher risk of recidivism after release.
- Provide help and direction in jobs, housing, substance abuse treatment/mental health, and other services for families and children of inmates.
- Prevent community efforts to reduce access to alcohol.
- Enhance community efforts to reduce access to alcohol.
- Provide help and direction in jobs, housing, substance abuse treatment/mental health, and other services for families and children of inmates.

Conclusion

The seriousness of the re-entry of ex-offenders and the likelihood of re-offending makes a serious impact on society. We need to address this issue in a more thoughtful and practical manner. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to this significant problem, which will address numerous aspects of this issue. In addition to the obvious social, health, and economic factors such as:

- Creating healthy and safe communities
- Better access to substance abuse treatment
- Supporting law enforcement officers that protect alcohol outlet density in all neighborhoods
- Strengthening our laws and enforcement strategies must become a priority. These policy issues emerge as a priority. These policy issues must become a priority. These policy issues emerge as a priority. These policy issues must become a priority. These policy issues emerge as a priority. These policy issues must become a priority. These policy issues emerge as a priority. These policy issues must become a priority. These policy issues emerge as a priority. These policy issues must become a priority. These policy issues emerge as a priority. These policy issues must become a priority. These policy issues emerge as a priority. These policy issues must become a priority. These policy issues emerge as a priority. These policy matters,
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cluded strongly in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. Sponsored by Rep. Rob Portman (R-OH), the ‘Second Chance Act’ offers only slightly in their approach to this complex problem, guided by the principles laid out in this significant problem, which is positive address numerous aspects of this

We know from long experience that if (former) prisoners can’t find work, or a home, or care, they are more likely to commit more crimes and return to prison....

We need to be both tough and smart on crime. Tough in enforcing the laws and smart in making sure that those who are           

Facts About State Prisoners Released Annually:

1 of 2 has had a violent offense conviction in his lifetime
1 of 3 will be rearrested within 3 years
3 of 4 have a substance abuse problem
2 of 3 will be rearrested within 3 years

The seriousness of the reentry of ex-offenders and the likelihood of re-offending makes a

Resources
U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Serious and Violent Offender Initiative website, http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov
Urban Institute, Reentry Roundtable, http://www.urban.org/content/PolicyCenters/Justice/Projects/PrisonerReentry/Projects/projects.htm

We need to be both tough and smart on crime. Tough in enforcing the laws and smart in making sure that those who are...
This is particularly true in low-income neighborhoods, or commits another crime and ends up back in prison. Rep. Wexler notes that “reintegrating prisoners successfully means therefore as much as the Bush Administration’s Offender Reentry Initiative. Another critical factor is alcohol and drug abuse treatment. Substance abuse is a significant problem for ex-offenders, with some 70 to 80 percent having some history of alcohol or other drug abuse. Fifty-seven percent of state prisoners released an overwhelming number of ex-offenders: Three out of four released each year.

The facts are alarming: as of December 31, 2001, there were an estimated 5.6 million ex-offenders living in the U.S. Those ex-offenders include 4 million former prisoners and 1.3 million adults in prison. If recent incarceration rates remain unchanged, an estimated 1 of every 15 persons (6.6 percent) will serve time in a prison during their lifetime. Nearly seven percent of all adults are in prison, and hence there is a greater likelihood that ex-offenders will be less inhibited. We must recognize, even with limited research, that the sheer volume of outlets complicates recovery for individuals seeking to address their alcoholism or alcohol influenced behaviors. Many alcohol residents in these neighborhoods offer discounted prices and promotions that encourage consumption or easy access to products. 5 We must recognize, even with limited research, that the sheer volume of outlets complicates recovery for individuals seeking to address their alcoholism or alcohol influenced behaviors. Many alcohol residents in these neighborhoods offer discounted prices and promotions that encourage consumption or easy access to products.

One study found that a city of 50,000 alcohol outlets would experience an additional 3.4 assaults and 2.7 motor vehicle crashes per year if one new alcohol outlet opened. 6 A study of 38 states and the District of Columbia found that the more off-site alcohol outlets a neighborhood has, the more likely it is to have more homicides. 7 A study of urban residential neighborhoods in New Orleans, using 1994-95 data, found that the more off-site alcohol outlets a neighborhood has, the more likely it is to have higher densities of alcohol outlets also had higher rates of on-premise alcohol outlets. 8

There are at least two theories that help explain the relationship between outlet density and violence. One says that the alcohol itself leads to passionate intentions against using violence, while the other says that the alcohol outlets are themselves the cause of the violence. The second says that it is the outlets themselves that define an environment in which social norms and external controls are weakened, making people in close proximity more likely to participate in activities which are illegal, dangerous, or violent.

The issue has serious implications for the offenders, their families, their communities, not to mention government budgets. Knowing that the number of alcohol outlets directly and adversely impacts their communities makes it worth looking at ways to reduce the number and availability of alcohol outlets as a way to reduce crime and violence.

Second chance becomes last chance if substance abuse prevention and treatment is not part of a community’s response to reentry. — James Copple

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Reentry Policies are the Key to Success

In 1986, the U.S. government was taking serious steps to address the personal and environmental problems faced by the inevitable return of the ex-offender into society. The Justice Department’s Bureau of Justice Affairs and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative describe some of the conditions that create the most formidable problems for ex-offenders and return them to prison at a cost. More research is needed on this connection. Further, the reality of the alcohol density in many of the neighborhoods that ex-offenders faces and threatens the safety of these neighborhoods.

Reentry refers to the process that these prisoners go through when they are released from prison. This process may seem simple, but in reality it’s a complex process that requires a lot of planning and coordination. It’s a process that can be affected by many different factors, including the level of success in prison and the level of reentry services that are available.

Some corrections officials—under pressure to cut costs—have curtailed prison programs and services that could ameliorate factors that place ex-offenders at higher risk of recidivism after release. Such actions can increase the likelihood of drug abuse, as well as physical or mental disabilities, and threaten the safety of these neighborhoods.

Reentry problems also have a disproportionate effect on neighborhoods. Their ex-offenders are more likely to victimize their children and their community. The act of offender reentry problems were introduced in 2001 and 2007 and are expected to be found in the prison a significant number of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. Sponsored by Rep. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Sen. George LeMieux (R-Florida), “represents our failure to realize that” the “Second Chance” Act (HR 4676 and S 2789) in the last Congress, the Act is designed to reduce recidivism crime, increase public safety, and help states and communities with grants to allow them to address the growing population of prisons returning “Some correctional officials—under pressure to cut costs—have curtailed prison programs and services that could ameliorate factors that place ex-offenders at higher risk of recidivism after release. Such actions can increase the likelihood of drug abuse, as well as physical or mental disabilities, and threaten the safety of these neighborhoods.

We know from long experience that it is even harder to make more crimes and return to prison—America is America’s alcohol density in many of the neighborhoods that ex-offenders faces and threatens the safety of these neighborhoods.

Key to Success

Reentry Policies are the Key to Success

Funds for reentry programs: grants to state and local governments for the development of comprehensive reentry programs; funds for job placement, housing assistance, mental health treatment, and specialized services for families. Key elements of the Act include:

- Promoting faith-based mentoring programs for ex-offenders
- Supporting Ordinances and Policies that limit alcohol outlet density in all neighborhoods
- Creating healthy and safe communities
- Helping avoid other collateral consequences, including increased public health risk, homelessness and unemployment
- Reducing the rate of alcohol and substance abuse among ex-offenders, which is good for the individual, as well as to our community.

Getting ‘A Second Chance’

Several bills designed to address the myriad of offender reentry problems were introduced in 2001 and 2007 and are expected to be considered on the floor in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate in the current Congress. The Act is designed to reduce recidivism crime, increase public safety, and help states and communities with grants to allow them to address the growing population of prisons returning offenders. The key elements of the Act include:

- Mentoring: grants totaling $15 million each in 2008 and 2007 (all community-based organizations for the mentoring of adult offender populations that are over half of the general prison population). The legislation is a good start. The community and environmental issues that compound or threshold an individual’s course back toward crime and recidivism must be confronted.

Using Environmental Factors to Improve Reentry Success

**Focus on the Community, As Well As Individuals**

In addition to the personal factors affecting individual ex-offenders’ chance of reentry success, several environmental factors are at play as well. The problem with the ex-offenders’ surroundings is particularly acute because studies show that people released from prison and jail in high concentration areas to a small number of communities in each state. And it is these communities that are ill-equipped to serve, support and supervise them. For example:

- Almost half the prison and jail population in Connecticut come from just five cities, which have the highest rates of poverty and nonwhite populations.
- One quarter of organizations that serve ex-offenders were located outside of the 25-office centers in which the highest numbers of people returned in 2001. In two of these six neighborhoods, there were no such services at all.

The Re-Entry Policy Council, spearheaded by the Council of State Governments to address state government officials grappling with the increasing number of people leaving prison and jail to return to the communities they left behind, released a summary of the subject in 2005. The report asserts that the nation’s current support system for offenders is not meeting the needs of both individuals and communities, and that they have the capacity to absorb their returning residents and to keep them out of jail.

Two environmental issues in particular deserve further attention, as they offer the greatest potential to help address reentry problems. These are the issue of alcohol availability and alcohol treatment. Addressing these issues of the availability of alcohol and drug treatment, and the number of outlets in a neighborhood where alcohol can be purchased.

**Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment Can Improve Chances**

Substance abuse is a significant problem for ex-offenders, with some 70 to 82 percent having some history of alcohol or other drug abuse problem. Fifty-seven percent of state inmates were regular drug users before prison. An estimated 2.7 million adults who had ever served time in State or Federal prison, including 4.3 million former prisoners and 1.3 million adults in prison. If recent incarceration rates remain unchanged, an estimated 1 of every 15 persons (6.6 percent) will serve time in a prison during their lifetime. Fifty-seven percent of all adults released from prison will be released at some point, and 85 percent of all.ex-offenders live in communities with high alcohol outlet density. Ninety-seven percent of adults released from prison will be released at some point, and 85 percent of all.ex-offenders live in communities with high alcohol outlet density.

One study found that a city of 50,000 residents in Los Angeles County with 150 alcohol outlets would experience an estimated 3.4x as many and 2.7x more violent crimes per year if one new alcohol outlet opened.

A study of Newark, New Jersey, found that areas of the city with higher density of alcohol outlets had significantly higher rates of violent crime. They also found that the alcohol outlet density rate was the single most important environmental factor explaining why violent crime rates were higher in certain areas of the city than others.

A 1998 study of urban residential neighborhoods in New Orleans, using 1994-95 data, found that the more off-site alcohol outlets a neighborhood had, the more likely it is to have higher rates of on-premise alcohol outlets.

A study of all states and the District of Columbia found that there were higher alcohol outlet rates in states that had higher rates of on-premise alcohol sales.

There are at least two theories that help explain the relationship between outlet density and violence. One says that the alcohol itself provokes passions into actions against victims and targets of violence. The second says that if it is outlets themselves that define an environment in which social norms and external controls are weakened, making people in close proximity more likely to participate in activities which are illegal, dangerous or violent.

The issue has serious implications for the offenders, their families, their communities, and to mention government budgets. Moreover, all of these environmental factors are playing a critical role. As ex-offenders and their communities make it worth looking at ways to reduce the number and availability of alcohol outlets as a way to reduce crime and violence.

**Make Ex-Offender Community Reentry a Success: Addressing Access to Alcohol**

Background

The facts are alarming: as of December 31, 2001, there were an estimated 5.6 million adults who had been released from prison (incarcerated for a period of 30 days or more), 6.6 million former prisoners and 1.3 million adults in prison. If incarceration rates remain unchanged, an estimated 1 of every 15 persons (6.6 percent) will serve time in a prison during their lifetime. Fifty-seven percent of all adults released from prison will be released at some point, and 85 percent of all ex-offenders live in communities that are ill-equipped to serve, support and supervise them.

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The issue has serious implications for the offenders, their families, their communities, and to mention government budgets. Moreover, all of these environmental factors are playing a critical role. As ex-offenders and their communities make it worth looking at ways to reduce the number and availability of alcohol outlets as a way to reduce crime and violence.