

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chair
Chair, Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
152 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Chair, Committee on the Judiciary
2318 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
B-351C Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Leahy and Smith and Ranking Members Grassley and Conyers:

Our diverse organizations represent law enforcement officers, judges, court personnel, corrections officers, policymakers, faith-based leaders, and mental health professionals. We come together to ask you to support S. ___/H.R. ___, the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act. This bipartisan bill, introduced by Senators Al Franken (D-MN) and Congressman Richard Nugent (R-FL), is vitally important to the criminal justice and mental health fields.

Individuals with mental health conditions are significantly overrepresented in the criminal justice system. In a recent five-site study of people in U.S. jails, 14.5 percent of men and 31 percent of women had a serious mental illness—rates in excess of three to six times those found in the general population. Taken together, these numbers comprise 16.9 percent of the jail population.ⁱ About three-quarters of jail prisoners who were identified as having a mental illness also met the criteria for substance abuse or dependence.ⁱⁱ

In 2004, Congress passed the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA), which supports collaborative programs that address the needs of justice-involved individuals with mental health conditions. MIOTCRA enhances public safety by funding training for law enforcement officers on how to identify and respond to incidents involving people with mental illnesses, increasing mental health courts nationwide, improving collaboration between criminal justice and mental health systems, and improving access to effective treatment. Across the nation, the initiative supports more than 300 jurisdictions, including four dozen mental health courts and more than two dozen police departments.

The Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act reauthorizes and improves this critically important program. In addition to extending the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration program for five years, the bill provides additional resources for veterans treatment courts, increases focus on resources and training for jails and prisons, and provides innovative training at police academies. This important legislation will ensure that state and local governments can continue to design and implement sound initiatives that improve the criminal justice system, increase public safety, reduce state and local spending, and help individuals with mental illnesses.

Please support S. ___/H.R. ___, the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act.

Sincerely,

National

1. American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
2. American Correctional Association
3. American Jail Association
4. American Probation and Parole Association
5. Association of State Correctional Administrators
6. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
7. CIT International Inc.
8. Corporation for Supportive Housing
9. Council of State Governments Justice Center
10. International CURE
11. Justice Fellowship, Prison Fellowship Ministries
12. Major Cities Chiefs Association
13. Major County Sheriffs' Association
14. Mental Health America
15. National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
16. National Association of Counties
17. National Association of County Behavioral Directors
18. National Association of Drug Court Professionals
19. National Association of Police Organizations
20. National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors
21. National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
22. National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
23. National Disability Rights Network
24. National Organization for Victim Assistance
25. National Sheriffs' Association
26. Pretrial Justice Institute
27. The Association of Women Executives in Corrections
28. The National African American Drug Policy Coalition, Inc.

Alabama

29. Alabama Department of Corrections

Arizona

30. David's Hope
31. Arizona Probation & Parole Association
32. Western Correctional Association

California

33. NAMI California
34. Healthy Minds Consulting
35. The Chief Probation Officers of California
36. Mental Health America - Orange County's

Colorado

37. The Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council
38. Mental Health America of Colorado

Connecticut

39. NAMI of Connecticut

Washington D.C.

40. Safe Streets Arts Foundation

Florida

41. Suncoast Center, Inc.

42. NAMI FL
43. Manatee Glens
44. NAMI Palm Beach County
45. The Key Clubhouse of South Florida
46. Outpost for Hope
47. The Florida Police Chiefs Association
- Iowa**
48. NAMI IA
49. NAMI Central Iowa
50. Story County Sheriff Paul H. Fitzgerald
51. NAMI Greater Des Moines
52. Friends of Iowa Women Prisoners
- Illinois**
53. Cook County Adult Probation Mental Health Unit
54. NAMI DeKalb, Kane-South & Kendall Counties
55. NAMI of Greater Chicago
- Indiana**
56. NAMI Indiana
- Kansas**
57. Johnson County, Kansas
58. Mental Health America of the Heartland - Kansas
59. Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt
- Kentucky**
60. Louisville Metro Department of Corrections
- Massachusetts**
61. Suffolk County Sheriff's Office
- Maryland**
62. NAMI Maryland
63. NAMI Anne Arundel County
64. NAMI Carroll County
65. NAMI Frederick County
66. NAMI Harford County
67. NAMI Howard County
68. NAMI Lower Shore
69. NAMI Metropolitan Baltimore
70. NAMI Montgomery County
71. NAMI Prince George's County
72. NAMI Southern Maryland
73. NAMI Washington County
74. Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
75. Montgomery County Police Department
76. Montgomery County Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
- Maine**
77. Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition (M-PAC)
78. Portland Police Department
- Michigan**
79. Sheriff Dean Roesler, Muskegon County Sheriff's Office
80. Michigan Dept. of Corrections
- Mid-Atlantic (MD,NY,DC,DE, PA, NJ)**

81. Middle Atlantic States Correctional Association
- Minnesota**
82. Anderson Professional Training Services
83. Minnesota Psychological Association
84. Vail Place
85. Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health
86. NAMI MN
87. Minnesota Department of Corrections
88. Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association
89. Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association
- Missouri**
90. NAMI Missouri
91. Comprehensive Mental Health Services, Inc.
92. NAMI St. Louis
93. Bridgeway Behavioral Health
94. NAMI Southwest Missouri
95. Mental Health America of the Heartland – Missouri
- Mississippi**
96. NAMI Vicksburg-Warren Co.
97. NAMI-MS
- Montana**
98. NAMI Montana
- New Hampshire**
99. Aliza Anvari, Esq., Littleton Police Dept. Prosecutor
100. Greater Nashua Mental Health Center at Community Council
101. Lara J. Saffo, County Attorney, Grafton County Attorney's Office
102. NAMI Nashua
103. Genesis Behavioral Health
104. Shelly Golden, Grafton County Mental Health Court Coordinator
105. Mayor Donnalee Lozeau, Nashua
106. NAMI Manchester
107. Mental Health Center of Greater Manchester
108. Speare Memorial Hospital
109. Hillsborough County
110. Halls of Hope Mental Health Court
111. Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center
112. Manchester Police Department
- New Jersey**
113. New Jersey Association of Mental Health And Addiction Agencies
114. Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT) - San Diego
- New Mexico**
115. NAMI-Westside Affiliate
- New York**
116. NAMI-New York State
117. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- Ohio**
118. Ohio Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence
119. NAMI of Franklin County
120. Clermont County Mental Health and Recovery Board

- Oregon**
121. The Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs
- Pennsylvania**
122. Healing Communities USA
123. Pennsylvania Prison Society
124. Allegheny Correctional Health Services
125. HPW Associates, LLC
126. Catholic Social Services/St. Jude Tri-County PSHI
- Rhode Island**
127. Rhode Island Department of Corrections
128. Mental Health Association of Rhode Island
- South Carolina**
129. NAMI of the Pee Dee
130. Charleston County Mental Health Court
131. Alston Wilkes Society
- Tennessee**
132. University of Memphis CIT Center
133. Major Sam Cochran, (ret.), Memphis Police Services CIT
- Texas**
134. Carole Jean Powell, Deputy Chief Public Defender, El Paso County Public Defender's Office
135. Bexar County Juvenile Probation
136. Gulf Bend Center
137. The Center for Health Care Services
138. NAMI Texas
139. Drug Policy Forum of Texas
140. Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable
141. NAMI Dallas
142. Community Education and Clinical Development
143. Grassroots Leadership
144. Texas Council of Community Centers
145. Mental Health America of Greater Dallas
- Utah**
146. Office of the Salt Lake County District Attorney, Sim Gill, Salt Lake County District Attorney
147. Salt Lake City Police Department
148. CIT Utah
149. Southwest Behavioral Health Center
150. Brigham City Police
151. Davis Behavioral Health
- Virginia**
152. NAMI Virginia
153. National Alliance on Mental Illness, Mid-Tidewater Chapter
154. Chesterfield/Colonial Heights Community Corrections Services
155. New River Valley Crisis Intervention Team/ Mental Health Association of the New River Valley
- Vermont**
156. Vermont Council of Developmental and Mental Health Services
- Washington**
157. Washington State Department of Corrections

158. Wisconsin
Appleton Police Department WI

ⁱ Steadman, H. J., Osher, F. C., Robbins, P. C., Case, B., and Samuels, S. (2009). Prevalence of serious mental illness among jail inmates. *Psychiatric Services*, 60 (6).

ⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics