

Even in East Flatbush, Brooklyn, which is located in my district, an astounding 44 percent of blacks and Hispanics earning between \$40,000 and \$50,000 received their loans from subprime lenders. We must make a conscious and focused effort to address the subprime lending crisis in predominantly black and Hispanic neighborhoods in New York City and across the Nation.

What is so ironic about this issue of the subprime mortgage crisis is that as a former New York City council member, my colleagues and I saw this crisis arise as representatives of the municipality. We even passed legislation, anti-predatory lending legislation, yet the legislation went nowhere due to the threat of litigation by the financial services sector. Now the crisis is upon us. Hundreds of thousands of Americans across this country are facing this crisis.

I am supporting and will champion any and all measures that ensure that all borrowers, especially those living in underserved communities, are no longer hurt by the recent events and tactics occurring in the mortgage market.

It is our responsibility, and in the public interest, to make certain that we eliminate predatory practices that have the potential to financially harm mortgage consumers living in America.

If we do not, I believe that we will generate an environment where predatory lenders will continue to actively sell high-cost, high-risk mortgages in many communities, including underserved communities, making the American Dream of all Americans an American nightmare.

□ 2045

FORECLOSURES ARE ALL ACROSS THE NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, listening to my colleague from New York, Representative CLARKE, it reinforced for me how important it is to deal seriously with the whole question of subprime lending and how vast foreclosures are all across the Nation.

I, like others, have been working with the coalition in my community, and many of them have come up with excellent ideas about what to do. But rather than just massaging the problem, than coming up with solutions, one solution that was put on the table the other day that I liked was the idea that rather than foreclosing on individuals who cannot pay the mortgages, why not rent the property to them and let them continue to live in it paying rent? Who knows, the time may very well come when they can go back to paying the mortgage.

Their lives never would have been disrupted. Plus we're finding that fore-

closed properties oftentimes end up being lose-lose situations; that is, it's a loss for the lender as well as a loss for the homeowner, because in many neighborhoods, once a foreclosure occurs and people move out, the houses are boarded up, and of course, vandals prey upon them, destroy everything that was in it.

And so I simply wanted to appreciate all of those individuals who are part of the coalition of community groups and organizations with whom I've been working. And I join with others across the Nation to say to our government that we must correct the subprime lending process. But we also must do something that will aid those individuals who find themselves in tough situations right now.

So I join with Representative CLARKE.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material thereon on the subject of my Special Order tonight, which is the Second Chance Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus and our Chair, CAROLYN CHEEKS KILPATRICK, I'm pleased to anchor this Congressional Black Caucus message hour today.

Let me commend all of the original cosponsors on this piece of legislation; the lead sponsor, DANNY DAVIS, who's joining me this evening in this Special Order; cosponsors STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES, JOHN CONYERS, ELIJAH CUMMINGS, SHEILA JACKSON-LEE, BOBBY SCOTT, HANK JOHNSON, BARBARA LEE, MAXINE WATERS, and the list goes on. The majority of the members of the Congressional Black Caucus are signatories to this very, very important piece of legislation.

The purpose of the Second Chance Act is to reduce recidivism, increase public safety, and help States and communities to better address the growing population of prisoners returning to communities. The bill will focus on four areas: jobs, housing, substance abuse, mental health treatment and families.

Nearly two-thirds of released State prisoners are expected to be arrested for a felony or serious misdemeanor within 3 years of their release. Such high recidivism rates translate into

thousands of new crimes each year and wasted taxpayer dollars, which can be averted through improved prisoner re-entry efforts.

The Second Chance Act of 2007 allocates \$360 million towards a variety of re-entry programs. One of the main components of the bill is the funding of demonstration projects that will provide ex-offenders with a coordinated continuum of housing, education, health, employment, and mentoring services. This broad array of services will provide stability and make the transition for ex-offenders easier, in turn, reducing recidivism.

I sat here this evening, Mr. Speaker, and enjoyed the speeches by many of my colleagues talking about National Bible Month. I am so pleased that they chose that subject matter, and I hope that the many Members that spoke this evening about the Bible and where it specifically says "when I was in prison you visited me," they will remember that their good talk and great conversation about the Bible apply to ex-offenders and that they will support the Second Chance Act.

It gives me great pleasure at this time to yield to my colleague and good friend, SHEILA JACKSON-LEE of Texas.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and the convener of this Special Order. Let me thank the chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, recognize that 43 members of the Congressional Black Caucus, 42 Members in the House, represent a basic conscience that has to craft for America the next steps.

I want to thank my good friend, Congressman DANNY DAVIS. He has been persistent in recognizing that there has to be a second chance. And I'm glad to join my colleague and my champion, my fellow champion of human rights, BARBARA LEE.

Let me also thank Congressman JOHN CONYERS, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee; the subcommittee Chair, BOBBY SCOTT. We worked very hard on this legislation as it was crafted by the authors and the staff to make sure this legislation started to move.

Congresswoman TUBBS JONES, I'm very glad that you raised the question of National Bible Week. As I listened to my colleagues give extremely personal stories of their life, let me say, as someone who represents an inner-city district and has spent much of her political life as much as her personal life in churches, as a Seventh-day Adventist, we are committed to the teachings of the Old and New Testament.

But in many different faith communities, I recognize that the Bible is one vessel, one language that speaks to the language of the Good Samaritan. Many other religious documents speak to it, but it speaks about taking care of our fellow brothers and sisters. And it's a story that I love, on the road to Jericho, on the road that addresses the question of helping others. That is what the Second Chance bill is all about.

And I just want to cite that it is designed to reduce recidivism, increase public safety, and help State and local governments better address the growing population of ex-offenders returning to their communities. I see them every day in my community.

The bill focuses on four areas: development and support of programs that provide alternatives to incarceration, expansion of the availability of substance abuse treatment, strengthening families, and the expansion of comprehensive re-entry services. And we held a series of hearings.

But as we talked about National Bible Week upcoming, this is a wonderful partnership between faith organizations for people to show their faith and helping people restore their lives.

I come from the State of Texas. In Texas, there are now 101,916 adults on parole, and there are 430,312 adults on probation; almost a congressional district.

At the same time you, we have a number of individuals by race. We see that out of that in Texas there are 40,000, almost, African Americans who are on parole and some 25,000 Hispanics. This speaks to the crisis nature of what we are facing.

And so I rise today to plead with my colleagues that one, the Second Chance bill must move through this House. In the Senate we understand that we are now prepared possibly for a final conclusion for this to get to the President's desk.

But I speak from the heart when I talk about the importance of the second chance. Unfortunately, Jena Six and that situation, it has become a

symbol for not giving young people a second chance. For the altercation that occurred, a school yard fight, it resulted in an indictment that resulted in adult time.

In the State of Texas, we are notorious for what we do for our young people; therefore, creating adults who will ultimately be incarcerated, and those will be on parole. And so, it is important that we understand the crucialness, if you will, of this particular bill.

Let me just cite headlines that I'd like to submit for the RECORD, because it relates to the criminal justice system in the State of Texas that really is upside down and, frankly, needs a complete overhaul, because what it says is more youth are tried as adults in Harris County than any other county, and really probably any other State. So we're beginning to move youth into the process of needing a second chance.

And what I'm suggesting, Mr. Speaker, is that more and more the young people are going into the criminal justice system, and there is a definite need for a second chance, because when these individuals come out, they are still young. They're still able to be saved. But we have nothing but an empty hole, a pit that they fall back into and they wind up being on the sea of recidivism.

And it says here that 67.5 percent of the prisoners were arrested for a new offense, almost exclusively a felony or a serious misdemeanor. This is what happens.

And so, more youth are tried as adults in Harris County. It means that, rather than having justice, we're con-

cerned about "just us," and so the criminal justice system has no sympathy.

In addition, we find that the youngest inmates, this is in Texas again, my county, tend to serve longer terms in juvenile prison, making them the kind of targets, or not targets, but kind of recipients, or those who would need the second chance, because they are laying the groundwork for going into the adult system.

I will include these articles for the RECORD that I'm now speaking to.

[From the Bureau of Justice Statistics, June 2002]

RECIDIVISM OF PRISONERS RELEASED IN 1994

(By Patrick A. Langan, Ph.D., David J. Levin, Ph.D.)

This study of the rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration of prisoners tracked 272,111 former inmates for 3 years after their release in 1994. The 272,111—representing two-thirds of all prisoners released in the United States that year—were discharged from prisons in 15 States:

Arizona, California, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, Virginia.

FOUR MEASURES OF RECIDIVISM

The study uses four measures of recidivism: rearrest, reconviction, resentence to prison, and return to prison with or without a new sentence. Except where expressly stated otherwise, all four study measures of recidivism—refer to the 3-year period following the prisoner's release in 1994; include both "in-State" and "out-of-State" recidivism.

"In-State" recidivism refers to new offenses committed within the State that released the prisoner. "Out-of-State" recidivism refers to new offenses in States other than the one where the prisoner served time.

CBC FOUNDATION

[Second Chance and Probation/Parole Analysis]

| State | Representatives | Adults on parole (2005) | Adults on probation (2005) |
|----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| California | Lee, Waters, Watson | 111,743 | 388,260 |
| Texas | Green, Jackson-Lee, Johnson | 101,916 | 430,312 |
| Pennsylvania | Fattah | 75,732 | 167,561 |
| New York | Clarke, Meeks, Rangel, Towns | 53,533 | 119,025 |
| Illinois | Davis, Jackson Jr., Obama, Rush | 34,576 | 143,136 |
| Louisiana | Jefferson | 24,072 | 38,308 |
| Georgia | Bishop, Johnson, Lewis, Scott | 22,851 | 422,848 |
| Michigan | Conyers, Kilpatrick | 19,978 | 178,609 |
| Ohio | Tubbs Jones | 19,512 | 239,036 |
| Missouri | Clay, Cleaver | 18,374 | 53,614 |
| Wisconsin | Moore | 15,505 | 55,175 |
| Maryland | Cummings, Wynn | 14,271 | 75,593 |
| New Jersey | Payne | 13,874 | 139,610 |
| Indiana | Carson | 7,295 | 121,014 |
| Alabama | Davis | 7,252 | 38,995 |
| Florida | Brown, Hastings, Meek | 4,785 | 277,831 |
| Virginia | Scott | 4,499 | 45,589 |
| Minnesota | Ellison | 3,966 | 117,073 |
| South Carolina | Clyburn | 3,155 | 39,349 |
| North Carolina | Butterfield, Watt | 3,101 | 111,626 |
| Mississippi | Thompson | 1,970 | 23,864 |

District of Columbia, Holmes Norton, Data Unavailable.
Virgin Islands, Christian-Christensen, Data Unavailable.

| State | Parole population, 2/31/2005 | White | Black/African American | Hispanic or Latino | American Indian/Alaskan Native | Asian | Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander | Two or more races | Unknown or not reported |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|-------|--|-------------------|-------------------------|
| New Jersey | 13,874 | 2,906 | 6,679 | 2,563 | 19 | 25 | 53 | 0 | 1,629 |
| New York | 53,533 | 8,770 | 24,467 | 18,739 | 225 | 312 | 0 | 0 | 1,020 |
| Pennsylvania ^a | 75,678 | 39,517 | 28,271 | 6,022 | 62 | 295 | 3 | 56 | 1,452 |
| Illinois ^b | 34,576 | 10,124 | 20,386 | 3,923 | 30 | 90 | ** | ** | 23 |
| Michigan | 19,978 | 9,170 | 10,209 | 309 | 132 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 120 |
| Minnesota | 3,966 | 2,350 | 996 | 319 | 201 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| Missouri | 18,374 | 12,246 | 5,665 | 356 | 55 | 37 | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| Ohio ^b | 19,512 | 9,717 | 9,580 | 156 | 39 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Wisconsin ^a | 15,505 | 6,983 | 6,712 | 1,209 | 432 | 122 | ** | ** | 47 |
| Alabama ^b | 7,252 | 2,503 | 4,670 | 32 | 2 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 35 |
| Florida | 4,785 | 1,940 | 2,725 | 105 | 5 | 0 | 0 | ** | 10 |
| Georgia | 22,851 | 7,979 | 14,872 | ** | ** | ** | ** | ** | 0 |

| State | Parole pop- ulation, 2/31/2005 | White | Black/Afri- can Amer- ican | Hispanic or Latino | American Indian/Alas- kan Native | Asian | Native Ha- waiian/Other Pacific is- lander | Two or more races | Unknown or not reported |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--|-------|---|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Louisiana | 24,072 | 8,519 | 15,432 | 4 | 4 | 2 | ** | ** | 111 |
| Maryland | 14,271 | 3,617 | 10,602 | ** | 13 | 17 | ** | ** | 22 |
| Mississippi | 1,970 | 847 | 1,104 | 11 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| North Carolina | 3,101 | 1,096 | 1,801 | 126 | 50 | 9 | 1 | ** | 18 |
| South Carolina | 3,155 | 1,029 | 2,081 | 20 | 8 | 1 | 0 | ** | 16 |
| Texas | 101,916 | 34,561 | 39,718 | 26,920 | 70 | 163 | 0 | 0 | 484 |
| Virginia ^b | 4,499 | 2,144 | 2,243 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 110 |
| California | 111,743 | 34,535 | 27,825 | 44,135 | 897 | 1,018 | 193 | 0 | 3,140 |

* Not known.

^a See Explanatory notes for more detail.

^b Some or all detailed data are estimated for race.

And then, of course, there is this short of years but long in lockup. This is a statement that talks about 13-year-olds who have 5 years, 6 years, 7 years, not because they are sentenced to that amount, but because they go into the juvenile system for 2 months, and because the handlers, the custodians, the jailers pile on more time, more time.

So what point am I making?

The point that I'm making is that we are assured that, with the ongoing cycle of young people going into the criminal justice system, that they then go into the adult system, and then we have this giant sinking hole.

The second chance is to save youngsters and adults from themselves, and to provide this safety net that provides jobs and training and also a social system that allows them to not be part of almost 70 percent recidivism.

Let me quickly just say that I was very pleased to have an amendment included into this legislation that particularly focused on some additional needs that we would have and that this bill also takes into account mental health concerns. This bill is a must.

My voice is gone, but my strength and my desire is here. If we are biblically grounded in this country, if we believe that there is value to religion and faith in the Bible and the Koran and many other documents that exude faith, then we should emphasize the charity of the Good Samaritan. That finds its way into the Jewish faith, the Christian faith and Muslim faith and any faith that is here. There is the concept of the Good Samaritan. That's what the Second Chance bill is.

And as I close, let me indicate that I am still working on this criminal justice system. It is a broken system. I believe that if you do the crime, you should pay the time. But where is the mercy on what the time is and how you rehabilitate people? That's why I'm offering legislation, the Good Time Early Release Bill that we hope will see hearings that will allow nonviolent prisoners to be released on their own recognizance and to allow them to get into this system. It is not a parole. It is good time early release, because these are Federal prisoners who are in the Federal system who are not subjected to parole and a limited probation.

So I'm looking forward to that location tagging this legislation, because if this passes, then those who will be re-

leased will have the safety net that is so very important.

It dismays me, Congresswoman TUBBS JONES, to see our young people, as you've been a prosecutor and I've been a judge, you've been a judge, to see them go into this system with no hope. I wish they were not in the system at all. But as they go into the system and then they become institutionalized as adults, then we need to have the second chance legislation that owns on up to the fact that we are, in fact, our brothers' and sisters' keepers, we are Good Samaritans, and we must find a way to save the lives of those who have paid their time and have come out to help their families.

With that, I ask us to really get this moving, and I thank you for your leadership.

I thank Congresswoman LEE for her yielding and Congressman DAVIS and all those that we've worked with for moving this bill forward.

Mr. Speaker, let me thank my dear friend, Mr. DANNY DAVIS of Illinois, for organizing this special order on the very important subject addressing the prison warehousing crisis in this country. H.R. 1593, The Second Chance Act, a bill of which I am an original co-sponsor, addresses the very serious concerns about the compromised state of warehousing prisoners.

Earlier this year the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security, of which I am a member, held hearings to address the state of certain conditions within the United States prison system. In one of those hearings, my colleagues and I considered the merits of The Second Chance Act, and my amendment which I offered in the last Congress was included in the base bill this year.

The Second Chance Act is designed to reduce recidivism, increase public safety, and help state and local governments better address the growing population of ex-offenders returning their communities. The bill focuses on four areas: Development and support of programs that provide alternatives to incarceration, expansion of the availability of substance abuse treatment, strengthening families and the expansion of comprehensive re-entry services. The Subcommittee has held a series of hearings on issues relating to re-entry of prisoners and this legislation dating back to the 108th Congress. Our most recent hearing, on March 20, 2007, focused on re-entry best practices and the continuing need for Federal support of re-entry program development.

Nearly two-thirds of released state prisoners are expected to be re-arrested for a felony or serious misdemeanor within 3 years of their release. Such high recidivism rates translate into thousands of new crimes each year and

wasted taxpayer dollars, which can be averted through improved prisoner reentry efforts.

The "Second Chance Act of 2007" allocates \$360 million towards a variety of reentry programs. One of the main components of the bill is the funding of demonstration projects that would provide ex-offenders with a coordinated continuum of housing, education, health, employment, and mentoring services. This broad array of services would provide stability and make the transition for ex-offenders easier, in turn reducing recidivism.

I also sponsored H.R. 261, the Federal Prison Bureau Nonviolent Offender Relief Act of 2007 which I introduced earlier this year. H.R. 261 directs the Bureau of Prisons, pursuant to a good time policy, to release a prisoner who has served one half or more of his or her term of imprisonment if that prisoner: (1) Has attained age 45; (2) has never been convicted of a crime of violence; and (3) has not engaged in any violation, involving violent conduct, of institutional disciplinary regulations.

H.R. 261, would address the problem of warehousing in the Nation's federal correction facilities non-violent offenders over the age of 45 who have served more than half of their sentences and pose no future danger to society. As I stated during the markup of H.R. 1593, the Second Chance Act of 2007, I strongly believe that in affording older offenders a second chance to turn around their lives and contribute to society, that ex-offenders not be too old to take full advantage of a second chance to redeem themselves in the eyes of their families, friends, and communities. I believe setting an eligibility age of 45 rather than 60 will better achieve the goal we all share.

I am also concerned about the rehabilitation and treatment of juvenile offenders in my home state of Texas as it appears that the administrators of TYC have neglected their duties. The April 10, 2007 "Dallas Morning News", reported that "two former Texas Youth Commission administrators were indicted on charges that they sexually abused teenage inmates at the state juvenile prison in Pyote". The same article also cited the 2005 investigative report by Texas Rangers' Sgt. Burzynski which found that the two indicted TYC administrators, Brookins and Hernandez, had repeatedly molested inmates in the Pyote prison. The report is cited as saying that Mr. Brookins, who during some periods was the top official, had shown sex toys and pornography in his office, while Mr. Hernandez molested inmates in classrooms and closets.

I hope that all of my colleagues would join me in supporting the Second Chance Act as well as my H.R. 261, the Federal Prison Bureau Nonviolent Offender Relief Act of 2007. It is time to make a change.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Prisoner reentry is not a democratic issue. It's not

a Republican issue. It is a common-sense issue. The facts are clear. Meaningful re-entry programs significantly diminish the chances that ex-offenders will return to prison.

It gives me great pleasure at this time to yield to my colleague and good friend, another leader on this issue, the Congresswoman from the great State of California, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you Congresswoman TUBBS JONES for once again organizing these very important message hours. Again, your experience as a judge, as a prosecutor, as a mother of a young African American brilliant young man understands very clearly why this legislation is so important.

□ 2100

You have seen lives shattered and you have done your best in so many ways to make sure that efforts such as the Second Chance Act gets passed. So thank you again for your leadership and for everything that you are doing.

And to Congressman DANNY DAVIS, let me just say I am so excited that finally we will get a chance to vote on this very important bill. You have been the lone voice in the wilderness and have been working on this for so many years. We all must begin to recognize the unique needs of those formerly incarcerated individuals on the path to reentry, and I can think of no one who has led in this effort such as yourself, Congressman DAVIS. So thank you again and congratulations.

Today our prisons and our jails are filled to the roof, mostly with non-violent drug offenders at enormous cost to the taxpayers. The politics of locking people up, very easy. Though not enough lawmakers have given really much thought to the hard part, and that is the fact that more than 95 percent, 95 percent of those who are locked up will return at some point home with little or no preparation to succeed and no support to keep them out of jail.

The reality is recidivism rates continue to rise, with nearly 70 percent of those released from incarceration returning to prison within 3 years. Without arming them with the necessary tools for survival, we are condemning them to repeat their past mistakes. This does nothing to reduce crime, nor does it do anything to provide for safer communities.

Today we can truly change the landscape of reentry programs. We must make rehabilitation a reality, not just an abstract proposal. By providing all formerly incarcerated individuals with greater access to education, jobs, health care, drug treatment, we will reduce recidivism rates across the board.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is, and just let me say with regard to my district alone, over 14,000 formerly incarcerated persons return to my congressional district every year. In my home State of California, over 500,000 adults, 500,000

adults are on parole or probation, primarily African American and Latino men. Moreover, California spends about \$7,200, just a drop in the bucket, every year on each student but pays over \$25,000 a year for each prisoner. Governor Schwarzenegger has increased the prison budget by more than \$5 billion. That's more than \$1 billion a year since he took office. This is not the way to go. And in California, unfortunately, and we have worked very hard to do this and still haven't quite made it, rehabilitation is still not a part of California's prison reform effort.

So what we are doing here by helping with the Second Chance Act and getting this passed provides for comprehensive reentry programs that are really critical not only to my State but to the entire country.

Up to 60 percent of formerly incarcerated individuals are unemployed a year after release, and up to 30 percent go directly to homeless shelters upon their release. The incidents of drug use among ex-offenders is over 80 percent. Now, that's twice the rate of the United States population. It is more than clear that something needs to be done.

Following the lead of our colleague from Illinois, Congressman DAVIS, just this past weekend, and I wanted to mention this because Congressman DAVIS was with at our first record remedy Clean Slate Summit 3 years ago to help those who qualify to legally clean up their record so that they can gain access to employment, education, housing, and civic opportunities. Since this first clinic in April of 2005, and I believe Congressman CLYBURN was there and Congressman WATT and they witnessed this, there were 900 to 1,000 individuals, primarily African American men, who came to learn about how to clear up their records.

Well, I am very proud to say that now we have cleared approximately 3,600 records. We worked to coordinate these efforts of community groups like the East Bay Community Law Center and All of Us Or None of Us, which is a phenomenal organization, headed by Dorsey Nunn, whom Congressman DAVIS knows, who has chapters all over the country, and they are certainly leading the way in our community. Also with great elected leaders like Mayor Dellums and Assembly member Sandre Swanson, Supervisor Carson, many of our judges and the District Attorney's office.

And it is only through this very comprehensive and cooperative approach that we can successfully assist those who are so often completely cut off from their communities. And this is only a small example of what we can do within a very narrowly defined law. But it is truly all about us or none of us.

We have a vested interest, a vested interest, in making sure that people re-enter our communities successfully. Help with cleaning their records provides an opportunity for formerly in-

carcerated individuals to get a job, to go back to school, or to find a place to live. This bill is so important to all of these efforts.

Also I want to thank Congressman DAVIS and Congresswoman TUBBS JONES for helping us deal with this one issue that, again, is so important but oftentimes goes below the radar, and that is allowing ex-offenders who have paid their debt to society to be allowed access to food stamps. Many don't even know that there is a lifetime ban, lifetime ban, on applying for food stamps for those who have been convicted of drug felonies. We say let them eat. I mean, you know, let them eat. Two hundred dollars, and you are turned out into a community with nothing and can't even get food stamps. This is a shame and disgrace.

Again, so many examples of laws that need to be changed, that need to be changed. But this moment we have now to help pass a bill to help formerly incarcerated individuals receive this second chance is so, so important.

Let me remind us of what Booker T. Washington once said. He said: "Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life but by the obstacles which he or she has overcome." We must end this cycle of injustice that is perpetrated by a system that continues to punish people long after they have paid their debts to society. No one condones criminal activity; but I tell you once one serves their time, they should be able to feed their family and move on with their lives.

In closing, like Congresswomen TUBBS JONES and JACKSON-LEE indicated, as I listened to those speaking tonight in honor of National Bible Week and as one who deeply believes in the wisdom and direction of the Bible, to love one another, I do hope that these statements which we heard tonight weren't just a bunch of rhetoric. I hope that all of those lifting up the teachings of the Bible tonight vote for this bill, H.R. 1593, and all of the legislation sponsored by members of the Congressional Black Caucus, which continues to be the conscience of the Congress. Our bills, many bills that we see come to this floor truly reflect the command of the Bible to take care of the least of these. So tonight and this week we have a chance to do just that.

And I want to thank Congresswoman CAROLYN KILPATRICK, our great Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus for making sure that we come to the floor and have this opportunity to let the country know what the Congressional Black Caucus stands for and what we are doing for the least of these.

Thank you Congresswoman TUBBS JONES again for yielding.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I yield to the gentleman from Vermont.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Congressional Black Caucus on this incredibly

important message hour. I wandered in and we should all be here. This is tremendous.

And, Representative DAVIS, thanks for your leadership, along with your colleagues in doing this. This is tremendous to listen to you. And you are the conscience of America, let alone the Congress. You are doing a great job.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I have been waiting 30 years for Congress to enact meaningful reentry legislation, as I have been deeply involved in prison reentry programs since my days as a municipal court judge, common plea judge, and county prosecutor in Cleveland. While prosecutor, I helped to establish the Pretrial Diversion program, as well as the Municipal Drug Court program. And I am so happy to be able to say that it's my understanding that the drug court program in Cleveland is going to move from the municipal court to expand to the common pleas court so it is county-wide. Both programs, I'm proud to say, still exist and continue to help ex-offenders move on with their lives and become productive citizens.

The State of Ohio has one of the largest populations of ex-offenders reentering the community, with about 24,000 ex-offenders returning to their respective communities annually. Of those ex-offenders, about 6,000 will return to Cuyahoga County, my county, and almost 5,000 will reenter in the City of Cleveland. Statewide about 40 percent of ex-offenders will return to prison. In Cuyahoga County about 41 percent will return. Such high recidivism rates translate into thousands of new crimes each year and wasted taxpayer dollars.

Today I am proud to stand with my colleague DANNY DAVIS as an original cosponsor of the Second Chance Act of 2007. This legislation is forward-thinking. It provides opportunities for all the Members of Congress who sincerely believe in helping their brother or their sister in times of need to support this legislation.

It gives me great pleasure to yield to the lead sponsor of the Second Chance Act, DANNY DAVIS of Illinois, and say to him, DANNY, thank you for your leadership on this issue. I'm proud to join with you around the work that we have been doing on behalf of ex-offenders across the Nation.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

First of all, I want to commend our leader of the Congressional Black Caucus, the gentlewoman from Detroit, Michigan, who engages us in such a way that we are able to do a number of different things as she provides opportunity for different individuals to display leadership. And so having Representative STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES convene each Monday a Special Order, an hour, where the Congressional Black Caucus members come and discuss issues, I tell you it is a pleasure

for me to be here with my Delta sister from Cleveland, Ohio, a distinguished jurist, having been a defense attorney, a judge, a prosecutor, legislator, who understands this issue from every angle, any way that you look at it. Individuals who are being defended, individuals who have gone into the system, having to pass judgment, in a sense, and having to bring charges. It is just a pleasure to be here and to commend you because you do this every week, every Monday night. I mean, I was struggling to get here because my plane had some difficulty, but I am so delighted that I made it.

And to have the opportunity to work with individuals like Representative BARBARA LEE, listening to BARBARA with all of the things that are going on in the Oakland community, the neighborhood, it almost makes you dizzy.

□ 2115

But the interesting thing about it is that you know that it's real because you get the opportunity to see it. I mean, just imagine that number of individuals that you all have helped clear their records so that they can get a job, so that they can go to work, so that they can have a chance. And to know that that's only one of the issues, because you're leading internationally in creating awareness about the AIDS pandemic, generating resources and money, bringing to the forefront health issues that people kind of forget about.

Barbara, it is just a pleasure and an honor to have the opportunity to serve in the same body with you at the same time and to be inspired and motivated by the work that you do and by the spirit that you have and the energy. I mean, Members of the caucus trying to keep up with you and SHEILA JACKSON-LEE, with your energy levels, I mean, it's almost impossible. You can't do it. And so, you know, you just do the best that you can and follow along and follow suit. Because it has been a combination of all this work that has raised this issue to the point where I'm holding in my hand 17 pages of paper that the Chicago Tribune did last week on this issue, beginning last Sunday with a front page story, and then following through Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. And the first story was three pages.

You know, the Chicago Tribune is a big newspaper, and they highlighted the work of the North Lawndale Employment Network that has a project where they're teaching ex-offenders how to make honey and how to tend to bees. And they've actually developed a business. And these individuals are able now to actually go to work every day, earn a living. Some of them have already been able to max out of that program, go into other areas and get jobs, as people have seen what they do. And so, we are making progress.

But even so, the progress that we're making is awfully small compared to what is needed. And I thought it was just so important what you said about

Booker Washington in terms of looking at where people have been and where they've come from. And so when we look at the history of this country and we recognize the travail, the difficulty that some population groups have had, that African Americans have experienced, and now we're trying to make sure that these individuals who have fallen off the path, who have succumbed in some ways to the difficulties of living in a tough environment, who are trying to find their way back, every day I come into contact with a story of somebody who is on the way up, on the way back, who found a way to get themselves a job.

I agree with all of my colleagues who have talked about this being National Bible Week. And I was thinking, as I listened, that we all get awards and we all get plaques and we all get things given to us. And the greatest thing that I have ever had given to me was something called the Gutenberg Award, which came from the Chicago Bible Society, which is a group of theologians and Bible scholars who analyze work. And on the basis of one's work and whether or not the work that they're doing is in keeping with the principles of the Bible, they give awards.

And so, when we talk about redemption and the need to redeem, there are more than 650,000 individuals who come out of jail and prison every year in the United States of America and they need to be redeemed. And so, if you want to be redeemed, you don't have to just go down by the Jordan Stream, you can go to some of the community programs that exist. You can help make sure that we provide resources so that those individuals who come home from jail and prison have some place to go, so that they have somebody to help them. Because if they get help, the chances of them recidivating are much less than if they don't.

The statistics show that 67 percent of the individuals who don't get help are more than likely going to do what we call "re-offend" within a 3-year period of time. More than 50 percent of them will be reincarcerated. But the recidivism rate goes down contingent upon the amount of help that they get. Some programs has it down as low as 18-20 percent. Well, that's just doing a great job. And I would hope that before the week is over, and we're expecting certainly before we adjourn, that the United States Congress is going to see the wisdom of reclaiming lives, of helping put people back on the employment rolls so that they can pay taxes.

You know, I would much rather help a person pay taxes. There is an old saying that if you give a man a fish, he can eat for a day, but if you teach him how to fish, he can eat for a lifetime. And so, if we help the individuals learn how to re-enter and function, then they're going to help further develop our Nation.

So, I just thank you so much for your leadership and the great work that

you've done on this issue and how you tie in the Ways and Means functions with the needs of these individuals. And we talk about, you know, people can't get food stamps.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. And if the gentlemen would yield, that legislation prohibits offenders who have drug convictions from getting student loans. So if they wanted to go back to school and change their lives, we've got legislation that prohibits them from having the opportunity to go back to college.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Well, there are so many barriers, when you sit and look at it, and you wonder, for example, the person who wants to go to college can't get a Pell Grant. And many of the individuals who are incarcerated are young individuals who got caught up maybe in a place where they were smoking cocaine or they may have gotten picked up and had some controlled substance on them. And now they're out of school, they can't get a Pell Grant. And fortunately, we're beginning to seriously look at that. And fortunately the Supreme Court is looking seriously at the sentencing disparities that have existed relative to the difference between the sentences that you get for a conviction of having crack cocaine versus powder cocaine.

And I think what we're really saying is that these issues have to be brought to the forefront, and that's why these Special Orders are so important. I've always been told that awareness brings about dissatisfaction, and that the more people learn about the way things are, the more dissatisfied they become. And then if you can take that dissatisfaction and organize it into some action, now you've got a chance for some movement.

And therefore, we want to thank all of those many groups who have been in support of the Second Chance Act, all of that coalition, The Working Group, individuals who work with criminal justice issues, individuals who work with drug courts, individuals who know that there is a better way and a different way, we just have to see that road.

And, you know, the Bible has just so many great experiences. You know, I remember the story of Paul, you know, Saul of Tarsus on his way to persecute the Christians, but something turned him around. He met something and somebody along the road. And from being a prosecutor, he became the greatest advocate for Christianity that we have known, other than Jesus the Christ himself.

And so, we hope that there are people who will change their opinions about what to do with individuals who have fallen off the path. And again, it's just a real pleasure to be here with you and to share this time.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Thank you, Congressman DAVIS. I want to close this hour with just a few comments.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Let me do this before you do. I would like to have this document included in the RECORD, be-

cause I think they are such a great indication of how mass media is beginning to understand the issue and beginning to recognize it as a problem. And I would like to include in the RECORD this document from the Chicago Tribune.

[From the Chicago Tribune, Oct. 28, 2007]

THE BEEKEEPERS

(By Louise Kiernan)

The men opened the hive and bees swirled up into the sky like sparks from a fire.

Bees flew through the weedy yard and past the chain-link fence. They flew into the alley, where a woman braced herself against the hood of a police car.

Bees flew toward the gas station, where the calls of hustlers selling drugs sliced the air. And beyond where the men could see them, bees scattered into the vacant lots and back-yard gardens, parks and parking lots of Chicago's West Side, searching, as always, for nectar.

This sunny morning in September 2006 was warm, but a bite to the breeze signaled fall. A boy walked by, dressed in a white shirt and navy pants. School had opened today. It was time for a new start, time for what the people who work at the non-profit agency on this corner in East Garfield Park had decided to call Sweet Beginnings.

The three men standing at the hive were learning how to become beekeepers. None had any experience at this job or, for that matter, much significant work history at all.

Tony Smith, a pug of a man with a broad face, moved with the graceful, contained gestures of someone accustomed to negotiating small spaces. At 30, he had spent half his life in prison.

Hovering uneasily behind him was Shelby Gallion, a 22-year-old former drug dealer. In an oversized T-shirt and jeans that blurred the outlines of his body, his expression unreadable, Shelby looked a little out of focus, as if he might eventually drift out of sight. He lived in a halfway house, still on parole.

Gerald Whitehead, the oldest member of the trio at 49, had been released from jail just a week before, after being cleared of a heroin-possession charge, the most recent stumble in the struggle to turn his life around after decades of violence and addiction. Gerald seemed intimidating, with his heavy-lidded eyes and thrust-out chin, but when he smiled, his face cracked open wide and bright.

The three men and 17 hives in this yard were the makings of a small experiment, an attempt to address one of the most stubborn and destructive problems in Chicago and other cities around the country: what to do with the hundreds of thousands of people released each year from prison.

Over the last three decades, harsher penalties for drug crimes and stricter sentencing laws have helped fuel explosive growth in the nation's prison population and, inevitably, in the number of inmates returning to society. In Chicago alone, roughly 20,000 ex-offenders come home each year.

Most end up in neighborhoods like this one, where unemployment is high, opportunity scant and the temptation of drugs and crime rarely more than a corner away. They don't stay long. More than half the state's prisoners find themselves back behind bars within three years of their release.

Finding work can reduce someone's chances of returning to prison. Although getting a job with a criminal record is difficult, checking the conviction box on an application poses only one hurdle. Many former inmates face other problems, from poor education and little understanding of workplace

rules to drug addiction or a lack of stable housing. And behaviors that help people thrive on the job—teamwork, communication—are often the opposite of those that ensure survival in prison.

For five years, the North Lawndale Employment Network, or NLEN, had helped ex-offenders find employment. With Sweet Beginnings, the agency decided to create its own jobs, in its own neighborhood, where people could learn how to work and build an employment history before they moved on. The idea attracted the attention of major philanthropies and companies, among them the MacArthur Foundation, Boeing Co. and Ben & Jerry's, each of which donated expertise or money to the effort.

Now, what may have once seemed like little more than a quirky venture—using former prisoners to produce honey in the ghetto—stood on the verge of transforming itself into a high-profile business.

Whether it would succeed depended in part upon the three men in the yard. The men measured success in starker terms. Failing, they feared, meant going back to the streets, going back to prison or getting killed.

During the coming year, through the bees' final foraging in fall, the threat of winter, promise of spring and richness of summer, the men and the enterprise of Sweet Beginnings would attempt nothing less than their own reinvention.

This morning's lesson was about survival. John Hansen, the beekeeper training the workers, showed them how to tilt the hives to get a sense of how much honey they contained. A heavy hive meant the bees had stored enough to make it through the winter. A lighter hive would need help.

The hives, with their unevenly stacked wooden boxes, called supers, looked like tipsy filing cabinets scattered among the clumps of goldenrod, Queen Anne's lace and clover.

The men moved among them, gently leaning each hive back and opening the lid to peer inside.

An elderly woman stopped at the fence. "What ya'll got in there? Bees?" she asked. "Yep," John answered, still bent over a hive.

"Oh, Lord, think I better get back."

After a minute or two, Shelby disappeared inside the building. John continued to make his way around the yard, Gerald and Tony in tow.

"Look at that," John cried out at Hive No. 2, lifting a frame thick with honey, each cell a stud of gold. At Hive No. 6, bees crowded the entrance, but the supers felt suspiciously light.

When they finished, John delivered his verdict.

"I think," he said, "we can bring them through the winter."

Second Chances

"To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee,—

One clover, and a bee,
And revery."—Emily Dickinson

In this pocket of the West Side, the past may fade or burn or erode almost to dust, but it persists. It holds on.

Like the Star of David that adorns the front of the Independence Boulevard Seventh Day Adventist Church, a remnant from the time when Chicago's Jews lived and worshiped in the neighborhood. Or the cracked patches of concrete in the overgrown lot at 1550 S. Hamlin Ave., where Martin Luther King Jr. lived for a short time in a rundown apartment to protest the way Chicago's blacks were housed.

Or, in the conference room at the North Lawndale Employment Network, the blotch of greenish ink on Tony Smith's right forearm, visible as he took notes in a narrow,

slanting script. It had been a tattoo of a cobra until he removed what he could with lemon juice and a sewing needle.

The cobra is a symbol of the Mickey Co-bras street gang, as is the "MC" inked on Tony's left shoulder. Police records say Tony belonged to this gang. He won't say much about that or anything else in his past.

What he will say is this: "I was a naive, snotty-nosed street kid who didn't care about himself or other people."

His first arrest came at age 9, for disorderly conduct. By the time he turned 13 he had been convicted in an attempted murder and was, according to a police officer who knew him, one of the most violent and feared gang members in the Cabrini-Green public housing complex. He marked his 16th birthday awaiting trial for beating three men with a gun and torturing two of them with a heated ice-chopper. That crime earned Tony a 30-year prison sentence.

He emerged almost 15 years later, having never used a cell phone or filled out a job application. When he talked about what he wanted to see for the first time with his own eyes, he named—after Navy Pier and Millennium Park—a Jet Ski.

Across the conference table, Shelby idly twirled one of the braids near his ear. Shelby's past was his shoes. The butterscotch Timberland boots imprinted with tiny hexagons or the candy-bright Bathing Ape sneakers. New shoes, like his new watch and new cell phone, the leather "Scarface" cell phone case—all accessories of the lifestyle he said he wanted to leave behind.

He began selling drugs about the time he started high school, and by his senior year, the money and all it bought had easily trumped education. Then came two stints in prison and, during the second one, nights spent lying on his cot, wondering what would become of his two young daughters.

That was why he had come to Sweet Beginnings. But he still thought about the old life. It took him a week at the agency to earn what he could have made in a matter of hours on the street.

And Gerald, standing at the kitchen window, staring out at the hives?

Gerald's past was the hovel of a building across the alley, where he had snorted \$10 bags of heroin. And his grandmother's house three blocks away, where he had stayed as a child and sexually assaulted a young woman as an adult. The bar around the corner where he once got shot on his birthday. His past was the man crossing the street he knew from Narcotics Anonymous and the cap-shadowed teenager who walked in the door of the North Lawndale Employment Network and addressed him as "Brother Bone."

Gerald's past was everywhere.

His earliest memory was of being bitten by a dog. He bit the dog back.

Gerald wasn't sure whether he remembered this incident because it happened or remembered it because he was told it happened. It didn't matter. He became that story: the boy who would bite back.

He grew up with two older brothers and 10 younger sisters, a mother who worked as a live-in nurse and a father who was, as he put it, "kind of missing in action."

Gerald struggled in school. He never learned how to read or write well. The other children made fun of him. By 6th grade, he had basically stopped going.

"I started out making a career," he said. "Whatever I could steal to make a hustle."

At the same time, he joined the Unknown Vice Lords. In the gang, he could force respect from all the people who had once belittled him. He moved up to become an "elite," a top-ranking gang member and close associate of onetime Vice Lords kingpin Willie Lloyd.

From the age of 20, Gerald bounced in and out of prison, spending more time inside than out: armed robbery, home invasion, criminal sexual assault, burglary, aggravated battery, drug possession.

He was 43 before he decided he couldn't do the time anymore. He has his conversion story. One night in prison, he broke down. Was this all his life would ever be? Had God put him here for nothing more? He wanted to die.

Then, in his cell, he sensed the spirit of his late grandmother, who always gave him a meal when he was hungry and a bed when he was homeless, and he felt at peace.

He could try to change.

It proved difficult. He lost a job working in maintenance at a nursing home after a background check revealed his criminal record, he said. There was an arrest for domestic battery. He was using drugs too, crack and then heroin. He became a dope fiend, a hype.

That went on for years, until his mother persuaded him to check into a residential drug treatment program, where he stayed for five months. Not long after he got out, in the spring of 2006, he stopped by the fence at NLEN on his way to sell loose cigarettes at the gas station nearby. He knew the agency; the month before, he had gone through its four-week job-training program for ex-offenders.

A couple of men were setting up hives. Gerald asked if he could watch. Then he asked if he could help. He stepped into the yard and began handling the hives, as though, one of the men observed, he had been beekeeping all his life.

At first, Gerald worked for free. He did whatever needed to be done: fixing the lawn mower, pulling weeds, picking up the trash that blew in from the alley. It was somewhere to go every day. Soon, the agency began to pay him, \$7.25 an hour.

Every day was a fight. Stay straight, go to work. Failing would be as easy as stumbling off the curb into the street.

"It's a wrasse trying to do good," Gerald said one afternoon. "You always got evil whispering in your ear."

He felt comfortable around the bees. He liked them. If you didn't know bees, he thought, they might scare you. But once you knew them, you came to respect them.

Gerald understood bees.

Finding sweetness

The building that housed the North Lawndale Employment Network, near the corner of West Flournoy Street and South Independence Boulevard, had once been a duplex and still felt like someone's home.

Walk in and you might find a worker bouncing a toddler on her knee while she interviewed the child's mother or an old woman grumbling about delays on the Pulaski bus.

Most days, the center hummed with people who came for one of the agency's job-training programs, a computer class or to get help writing a resume. Amid the bustle, the Sweet Beginnings employees set up beekeeping class at whatever table happened to be free and began to learn about bees.

They learned there are three types of honeybees: the worker bee, which is female; the drone, which is male; and the queen bee, which mates with the drones and lays the colony's eggs.

They learned that a worker bee lives for about six weeks. They learned that it takes the nectar from 5 million flowers to make 1 pint of honey. They learned that pollen mixed with nectar is called bee bread.

During these lessons, Tony took notes on a yellow legal pad. Gerald tilted his chair back or leaned forward, head propped on his arms, always restless. Shelby occasionally cleaned his nails with a public transit card.

Their teacher, John Hansen, was 76 and white and jangled the change in his pocket. He had begun keeping bees 31 years before, after he saw a sign someone had posted on a bulletin board at the suburban publishing company where he worked, offering to sell two hives. He went on to become president of the Illinois State Beekeepers Association, and in his retirement, he still kept bees, sold honey and ran a small business managing hives and removing bees from people's homes.

Of everything John taught the men about bees, they found nothing as interesting or amusing as what they learned about drones.

When drones hatch, the worker bees help them out of their brood cells while the worker bees must emerge on their own. Drones that mate with the queen on what is euphemistically called the "nuptial flight" die because the act rips their sexual organs from their bodies. When winter approaches, worker bees drive the drones from the hive, to certain death.

One morning, Tony walked in with his heavily underlined copy of "Beekeeping in the Midwest," the book they were assigned to read.

"It said male drones are like human males," Tony told John. "They don't do no work. I kid you not, that's what they said." The book doesn't compare men and bees; that was Tony's analysis.

In the beginning, the men's hands-on instruction mostly involved learning how to care for the hives and prepare them for winter. While they worked, they used a smoker, a metal can with attached bellows, to blow smoke into the hives to distract the bees. The smoke causes the bees to act as though their hive is on fire, and they eat honey to fortify themselves to flee, ignoring intruders.

Honey bees usually sting only if they feel threatened. Tony had never been stung, so John plucked a bee from a hive and stung him with it to make sure he wasn't allergic to the venom. Gerald hardly seemed to notice stings or care beyond issuing the occasional epithet. Shelby seemed the most leery, often hanging back while the others worked. But when Tony asked if the bees scared him, Shelby denied it.

In the early fall, the men learned how to extract honey, to harvest it from the frames where bees build the combs.

Because the Sweet Beginnings hives didn't contain enough honey to spare, John brought in eight frames from his own apiary. The frames, stacked in the kitchen of the resource center, looked a little like wood-frame screens, except that, instead of wire grids, the panels held hundreds of hexagons filled with honey.

As the men crowded around a large metal tank, a lone bee banged against the kitchen window.

"Do we have to actually do it?" Tony asked.

"Yeah, you guys are going to do it," John replied.

To extract honey, a beekeeper uses a knife to cut open the wax caps that seal the individual cells of honey in the frame. Then, the frames are placed in an extractor, which spins them to release the honey. The honey drips down the walls of the extractor and exits through a tap.

Slowly and delicately, Shelby slid the knife against the frame. Wax curled off in strips. A slight scent, sweet and floral, filled the kitchen.

"Just swipe it," Tony advised.

"Let it ride even and flat," Gerald said.

"You're doing fine," John said. "Just watch your fingers."

Tony and Gerald each took a turn. The knife, as it drew across the wax, made the

thick, wet smack of a cartoon kiss. Sunlight warmed the honey in the frames to the color of amber, glowing against the black shadow of the blade.

"That honey look good, don't it?" Tony asked.

As the extractor spun, the air began to smell sweeter and sweeter. Thin streams ran down the inside of the tank. Minutes passed. A nickel-sized dollop of honey pooled on the filter atop the white bucket under the tap.

"There's the first drop," John said.

While the extractor whirled, the men went outside to check on the bees. Brenda Palms Barber, the exuberant black woman who served as the North Lawndale Employment Network's chief executive officer, joined them.

"I want to see how the babies are doing," she called out, standing at the hives, perfectly at ease in her gray suit while the others wore jackets with netted hoods.

More than two years before, Brenda had come up with the idea for Sweet Beginnings when she decided that the employment network needed to do more than help people find jobs; it needed to create them.

She considered a landscaping business or delivery service but worried that customers might be reluctant to allow ex-offenders in their homes. A friend suggested a honey coop.

Brenda knew nothing about honey, but the idea intrigued her. She liked it even better when she learned that some people consider urban honey more flavorful than its rural counterpart because the bees can gather nectar from more varied flowers within a shorter distance. Imagine creating sweetness out of the asphalt and hardship of the West Side.

The agency launched Sweet Beginnings in the spring of 2004 with a grant from the Illinois Department of Corrections. Two years later, after parting ways with the original group of beekeepers working with the agency, the program started over with fresh bees and a new idea.

The bees came from Wisconsin, picked up and delivered by NLEN's chief operating officer, who had to roll down the windows of his Jeep Cherokee on the way back because the 30,000 bees generated so much heat and noise.

The new idea came from a business plan created by volunteers at Boeing, the chairwoman of the board of Ben & Jerry's and others. It called for Sweet Beginnings to shift its focus from selling honey to selling honey-based products such as lotion and lip balm. They hoped the move would increase profits and, with the expansion into manufacturing, packaging and marketing, the job prospects of its workers.

When Brenda and the beekeepers returned to the kitchen, about 4 inches of honey stood in the 5-gallon bucket.

She passed out plastic spoons and everyone dipped in to taste.

"Yum," she said. "It's really, really good."

She continued to talk, in a stream of words as smooth and unbroken as the honey pouring into the bucket. She talked about biscuits and business competition and hosting a honey cook-off and social purpose and making lip balm.

When she was almost done, she said, "That's some of the stuff we're thinking." Then she paused and said something else, slowly, as if the idea had just struck her.

"Our demographic," she said, "is the opposite of the people working on it."

Under suspicion

"There is a Thief Amongst Us!" the signs announced.

"IS IT YOU!"

One sign was posted above the sink in the kitchen of the resource center. Another was taped to the bathroom door. More hung on the walls next to inspirational quotes from Eleanor Roosevelt and Gail Sheehy.

The signs went up in late September, after someone stole the agency's digital camera from a cabinet in the downstairs conference room. It was only the second theft in the two years since NLEN had moved into the building, and it hurt.

The agency prided itself on being the kind of place where visitors wandered back to the kitchen to help themselves to coffee and bought candy for school fundraisers by dropping a dollar on a desktop.

No doors barred the offices; no cameras peered down from the ceilings. The clients who came here already felt as though the world treated them like criminals; the people who helped them didn't want to do the same.

That trust disappeared with the discovery of a dented cabinet door.

Brenda felt betrayed. She didn't like thieves. She could find a job for a murderer before she could find one for a thief. Stealing was a crime of opportunity, and every time a thief saw something to steal, he had to decide not to steal it.

If the signs shouted the crime, other conversations in the building occurred in whispers.

Who would know the camera was kept in the basement conference room, in the cabinet with the VCR? The beekeepers, who watched videos for their classes. And Gerald? Well, he had been an addict, and everyone knows that hypes steal.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. I want to highlight, if I might, just a couple of programs in the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, that have been successful in community re-entry.

I have served on the board of the Community Re-Entry Program under the Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries for some 25 years. I remember with great glee Rev. Dick Searing, who has gone on to shine down upon us as we continue his work, as well as Charles See, who is the executive director, and a lot of the members that were on the board. We were able, through Community Re-Entry, to do a number of things, and one of those was to develop care teams, and the care teams were made of ex-offenders. And we developed these care teams such that at one point in time they were literally serving as caretakers or workers for senior citizens staying in public housing.

One of the senior citizens actually said that she viewed the, we called them "care team members," and they wore red jackets, and she stated how she felt about them. And she said, "They're not criminals. They're just like my sons. And they've been taking care of me."

The care teams were paid employees of Community Re-Entry. They received a full-time benefit package, including vacation, health insurance and pension that was fully vested after 1 year. The recidivism rate for our care team members was less than 5 percent.

We also had a program under Community Re-Entry called Friend to Friend. The Friend to Friend program recruited, trained and coordinated volunteers to visit men and women in prison. Male volunteers are matched with men at Lorain Correctional and Grafton Prison located in Lorain County Ohio, and females were matched with women at the Pre-Release Center in Cleveland. The purpose of the pro-

gram is to reduce socialization of people who are incarcerated and help them prepare for re-entry into the community. Because one of the dilemmas is that sometimes the penal institution is so far away from the family background, that they have a family home that they have no way of going to visit. Also, it is said that an inmate in prison is more likely to successfully re-enter if he has a support base around him when he or she returns home.

Another wonderful program that we had was we started a catering service that was run by ex-offenders who prepared boxed lunches, and we were able to serve many of the downtown businesses who did box lunches. We also had a painting company, and we were able to paint many of the different houses across the county.

What I would really just want to say in concluding this is that this is a unique opportunity for this Congress to step up and support a program that truly has been successful across the country. Community entry means that we will say to ex-offenders in this Nation, if you have done your time, then you have paid your commitment to the United States, the State of Ohio, whatever State you come from, and we now want to help you come back to be a productive citizen in the United States of America; paying taxes, raising families, paying child support, and really helping to make our community a better place.

I am so pleased to have an opportunity, and I said, I've been waiting 30 years for the Federal Congress to come back and do what they need to do with regard to community re-entry.

I thank all of my colleagues and friends for the opportunity. And I'm going to say it one more time, if we are truly going to celebrate the Bible, and my grandfather was a minister, I'm a student of the Bible, and I can name Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and go down the list, but I will say to you, the best thing that we can do is to take care of one another.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Second Chance Act, and I thank Mr. Davis for introducing this important piece of legislation.

In America we have more than 2 million people in prison. Of these, over 600,000 are released each year. Very few of these individuals are prepared to return to their communities or receive support services to ease their transition.

These ex-offenders face serious impediments in obtaining employment, and often have serious mental or physical ailments that remain unaddressed. Today, approximately half of all black men are jobless. Amongst ex-offenders this number is even higher.

There is a revolving door of ex-offenders into many of our neighborhoods. With few opportunities, two-thirds of all ex-offenders are arrested for new crimes within a few years of their release. We must give these individuals the opportunity to become productive citizens.

The Second Chance Act will go a long way towards this goal by providing transitional assistance to ex-offenders reentering their communities. By focusing on the major impediments that face ex-offenders, the Second Chance Act seeks to reduce recidivism and give those reentering society a new opportunity to turn their lives around. This legislation addresses the need for jobs, housing, and substance abuse/mental health treatment, and it works to reunite families and provide the appropriate training and rehabilitation for these individuals.

This bill will increase public safety and give millions of ex-offenders a chance to be positive productive citizens. I strongly urge my colleagues' support.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3043, DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

Mr. WELCH of Vermont (during Special Order of Mrs. JONES of Ohio), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-427) on the resolution (H. Res. 794) providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 3043) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

□ 2130

WORKFORCE CAROLINA

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Workforce Carolina on its 20th anniversary of doing business in North Carolina. Workforce Carolina is a woman-owned business services company founded by Teresa Lewis that serves seven counties in the Fifth District of North Carolina. It assists employers throughout North Carolina's Triad region with job placement, employment screening, payroll and skills assessments. This company has been a growing part of the local economy and each year employs upwards of 3,000 people through its two offices in Mt. Airy and Elkin, North Carolina. In fact, it is the fifth largest employer in Surry County, North Carolina.

This year, Workforce Carolina was named one of the best places to work by the Triad Business Journal. The business journal also recognized Workforce Carolina as one of the fastest growing companies in the Triad in 2006.

I want to congratulate this fine company for its 20 years of services to its community and its commitment to excellence in the workplace. I wish all the good people at Workforce Carolina

many more years of successful business.

NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a book that has changed the course of history and left its mark on every level of our society. The Bible has been a God-given source of guidance for humanity for thousands of years and was a wellspring of wisdom and truth for the Founders of our Nation. As we approach National Bible Week, which is traditionally celebrated during the week of Thanksgiving, it is important to pause and reflect on how this Good Book has shaped the world, changed countless millions of lives, and brought humankind to a better understanding of our God and of our place in the world.

The Bible is a deep repository of fundamental and universal truth that has stood as a guide post for the generations. It teaches us how we ought to relate to our Creator and how to love our fellow human beings. During times of turmoil, confusion and strife, I can think of no more important source of guidance than the wisdom of this unchanging and inspired book.

The Bible offers us hope when circumstances are dire. The Bible is a source of strength when our human frailty brings us low, and when we are surrounded by darkness, as the psalmist wrote, the Bible "is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path." In all of its transcendent wisdom, the Bible does not fail to connect to our human condition. It kindles our joy and beckons us to know God regardless of our place in life.

Throughout my life, I have drawn on the words of the Bible to lead me and inform my moral compass. The Bible is an unshakeable pillar of truth that provides the surest of moral foundations for society's founded on and reliant on its inspired content. The Bible has nourished a dialogue of our Nation's public square and has bolstered the development of a strong moral identity for hundreds of years.

I encourage my fellow Americans to dig deep into the Good Book and discover for themselves what riches God's word has in store for them.

AMERICAN MEDICINE TODAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor tonight to talk a little bit about health care. Of course, we are enmeshed in the great State Children's Health Insurance Program debate here this week, that load having been taken

by the Senate at the end of last week, the bill being sent off to the President, we expect a veto, and probably sometime before this week is over, we will, one more time, test whether or not that veto will be overridden or sustained. I suspect the numbers will not have changed from the last time when the veto was sustained. So we are going to continue to have this debate in front of us for some time.

I do want to talk about the State Children's Health Insurance Program in some detail. But I want to put it in context. I want to put it in the context of what is happening in American medicine today, the transformational process that is going on in American medicine today and how those rapid advances in science are being affected by the policies that we craft here in this body and indeed how that has happened several times during the last hundred years, and we may expect it to happen in the future, but why the decisions we make today in this body are so critical for the future of health care in this country not just for next November, not just for a year from now, but for decades into the future.

Mr. Speaker, it is so critical, so critical that we develop a near-term, a mid-term and a long-term plan or strategy when it comes to crafting our health care policy. Sadly, I don't think this House has really been engaged in that process. We have been more fascinated by the political aspects of the fight.

Mr. Speaker, indeed, medicine is at a critical crossroads. This is a time of great transformation within the science. Down one of these pathways is a whole new genre of personalized care, changes in information technology, changes in the study of the human genome, changes in protein science, changes in imaging, the speed of information transfer; and indeed a time of rapid learning all serve to increase value for the patient.

Late last week at a conference downtown, Dr. Elias A. Zerhouni, the head of the National Institutes of Health put it in terms of the four Ps. He described a type of medicine in the future which will be predictive, personalized, preemptive, and participatory.

Now, Mr. Speaker, down the other path leads to the continued expansion of the reach and grasp of the Federal Government. Could this path equate to increased value for the patient? Well, the answer might be yes, but history has not been kind to that experience so far for this type of trajectory. The trend tends to become process driven, intensely process driven to a greater and greater degree rather than creating a true patient-centered environment.

Medical care, in fact, could be rationed in some of the most insidious ways that medical care can be rationed, and that is in the treatment room itself. That is by not paying for the care, not paying for the imaging, not paying for the physician services,