

Madam Speaker, I hope you will join me in extending heartfelt thanks to Larry McCarthy for his tremendous contributions to our State and wish him strength during this difficult time.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, November 5, 2007*

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. 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.

Another reason why I strongly support this legislation is because it includes a provision contained in an amendment I offered during the Judiciary Committee markup of this bill in the 109th Congress. That amendment, incorporated in H.R. 1593 as Section 243 of the bill, requires that the:

Attorney General shall collect data and develop best practices of State corrections departments and child protection agencies relating to the communication and coordination between such State departments and

agencies to ensure the safety and support of children of incarcerated parents (including those in foster care and kinship care), and the support of parent-child relationships between incarcerated (and formerly incarcerated) parents and their children, as appropriate to the health and well-being of the children.

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 bill H.R. 261, the Federal Prison Bureau Nonviolent Offender Relief Act of 2007. It is time to make a change.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. NITA M. LOWEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 6, 2007*

Mrs. LOWEY. Madam Speaker, I regrettably missed rollcall votes Nos. 1034, 1035, and 1036 on November 5, 2007. Had I been present, I would have voted in the following manner: rollcall No. 1034: "yes"; rollcall No. 1035: "yes"; rollcall No. 1036: "yes."

RECOGNIZING CAROL GORDY ON THE COMPLETION OF A SUCCESSFUL YEAR AS 2007 BCA CHAIRMAN

**HON. JO BONNER**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 6, 2007*

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, it is with great pride and pleasure that I rise today to honor Mrs. Carol Gordy as she completes a highly successful term as the 2007 chairman of the Business Council of Alabama (BCA).

Carol has been a distinguished member of the Brewton, Alabama, business community for almost three decades. In 1990, she purchased Natural Decorations Inc., known as NDI, from its original founders. Since that time, Carol and her husband, Joe, have grown the company from 10 to 100 employees and increased sales from less than \$1 million to more than \$16 million a year.

NDI is located in a small town in Alabama; nevertheless, it is a world-class leading manufacturer of high-end floral and botanical reproductions. Counted among its customers are Neiman-Marcus, Horchow, and interior designers worldwide, with ads appearing regularly in magazines such as Architectural Digest, Veranda, and Traditional Home. NDI also has exclusive licensing agreements with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and the Versailles Foundation for Monet's Giverney Gardens.

Under Carol Gordy's leadership as both chairman and chief executive officer, NDI has been nominated for 10 ARTS Awards, the premier awards program for the home decorative accessories industry, and received six. In 2001, NDI was inducted into the ARTS Hall of Fame. Additionally, NDI has been recognized for outstanding achievements in workplace safety.

It is this commitment to excellence in her own business that has made Carol such a valuable asset to BCA. In 2005, BCA leaders recognized her dedication to the association and asked her to join other volunteer leaders to serve as the group's first vice-chairman, a position that put Carol in line to be the first woman in BCA's history to serve as chairman.

A native of Dublin, Texas, Carol was raised in New Mexico. She started her first of three retail flower shops in Albuquerque and was the first person from New Mexico ever to be inducted into the American Institute of Floral Design in Washington, DC in 1980.

Carol's commitment to her community is second to none. She currently serves on the boards of A+ Education Foundation, BankTrust, Alabama Technology Network, Rotary International, the Quality of Life Chair for Alabama Communities of Excellence, and the Accessory Division of International Home Furnishings Center, High Point, NC.

Carol is a member of the Governor's Commission on Quality Teaching and has served on the Governor's Commission on Efficiency, Consolidation and Funding. She was a member of Leadership Alabama Class XXIII and served as a judge for the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, California. She is also a member of Voices for Alabama's Children.

Madam Speaker, there are few individuals more dedicated or more committed to helping their communities than Carol Gordy, and I