January 11, 2016

The Honorable Robert W. Goodlatte  The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Chairman  Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary  Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives  U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515  Washington, D.C. 20515

Re:  H.R. 3406 (the Second Chance Reauthorization Act of 2015)

Dear Chairman Goodlatte and Ranking Member Conyers:

On behalf of the American Bar Association, I write to express our support for H.R. 3406, the Second Chance Reauthorization Act of 2015, and to urge the members of the House Judiciary Committee to promptly approve the bill without weakening amendments.

The ABA, with over 400,000 members from across the nation, believes that reauthorization of the 2008 Act is essential to providing continuity for its evidence-based and cost-effective support for programs that improve reentry from prisons, jails, and juvenile facilities and that serve, not incidentally, to advance public safety.

This bipartisan bill provides desperately needed resources to state and local governments, as well as community-based organizations, to improve success rates for people released from prison and jail. In 2013, federal, state and local correctional facilities held more than 2.2 million people – at least one in every 200 U.S. residents – and prisons released 623,337 individuals back to their communities. More than 9 million individuals are released from jails each year. Unfortunately, most face numerous challenges when returning to the community, and over half are reincarcerated within three years of their release. This level of recidivism is not inevitable: Research confirms that targeted “smart-on-crime” policies supporting comprehensive, coordinated services can help formerly incarcerated individuals find stable employment and housing, thereby reducing recidivism and reliance on incarceration, and, as an additional public benefit, reducing public spending on corrections.

By providing the resources needed to coordinate reentry services and policies at the state and local levels, these bills will ensure that the tax dollars spent on corrections do not simply fuel a revolving door in and out of prison. State and local governments around the country, as well as community and faith-based organizations, are in dire need of these
resources to address prisoner reentry and recidivism-reduction efforts in our communities.

We urge members of the Judiciary Committee to support H.R. 3406 so that it may soon be considered by the full House of Representatives and enacted into law.

Sincerely,

Paulette Brown

cc: Members of the House Committee on the Judiciary