

County of Monterey



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

LUIS A. ALEJO, Chair, District 1
GLENN CHURCH, Vice Chair, District 2
CHRIS M. LOPEZ, District 3
WENDY ROOT ASKEW, District 4
MARY L. ADAMS, District 5

September 11, 2023

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Alex Padilla
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: S. 1165, the Reentry Act of 2023 – SUPPORT

On behalf of the County of Monterey Board of Supervisors, I am writing to express our support for S. 1165, the *Reentry Act of 2023*. This bipartisan, bicameral legislation would expand access to health care, including mental health services and substance use disorder treatment, for Medicaid-eligible individuals 30 days before their release from jail or prison.

Over half of people in state prisons and two thirds of individuals in jails have substance use disorder (SUD), compared to 8.5% of the general population. Upon release, these individuals are uniquely vulnerable to overdose due to a reduced physiological tolerance for opioids, lack of effective addiction treatment options while incarcerated, and poor care transitions back into the community. Individuals reentering society after incarceration are 129 times more likely to die of a drug overdose in the first two weeks post-release than the general population.

Currently, federal law does not allow any form of federal health coverage for incarcerated individuals except under very limited circumstances. This creates a serious coverage gap when individuals are released, as they often have no access to health care or treatment during a stressful and dangerous time. The Reentry Act would allow Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to restart coverage for eligible incarcerated individuals up to 30 days prior to their release from a jail or prison.

We urge you to cosponsor S. 1165 and thank you for your continued support for adequate access to health care for all individuals.

Sincerely,

LUIS A. ALEJO
Chair, Monterey County Board of Supervisors