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Georgia State Representative Smyre Attends President Bush's Signing of the Second Chance Act

(April 10, 2008) Georgia State Representative Calvin Smyre, President of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, was among those witnessing President Bush's signing of the Second Chance Act, H.R. 1593.

H.R. 1593, one of NBCSL's top legislative priorities, seeks to drastically reduce the stunning recidivism rates in the United States by authorizing a new stream of funding for prisoner reentry programs. *"The bill, designed to combat the ills of drug abuse in urban and rural communities will have a tremendous impact on drug treatment and rehabilitation programs in many of the areas that I and fellow African American legislators represent across the nation,"* said President Smyre. *"Signing of this bill is recognition from the President and our Congressional Representatives that those plagued by drug use in the inner city and rural America is worth saving."*

During today's speech, President Bush acknowledged and applauded the work of faith-based communities and community-based groups calling them members of the armies of compassion. *"They help addicts and users break the chains of addiction. They help former prisoners find a ride to work and a meal to eat and place to stay. These men and women are answering the call to love their neighbors as they'd like to be loved themselves. And in the process, they're helping prisoners replace anger and suffering and despair with faith and hope and love,"* said President Bush.

Studies have shown that ninety-five percent of all existing prisoners will be released at some time within the near future which means that at the current rate more than half will return to prison within three years. Often times committing a more severe crime than the one they committed before. "These startling statistics show that our focus should remain on ensuring that these reentry programs are a lasting, long-term Federal priority, which remain adequately funded and supported," said Smyre. "We must ensure the safety and economic vitality of our cities; and we must support these programs that are proven to blunt the precarious effects of this continuous cycle."

For more information on the signing of H.R. 1593, please visit www.whitehouse.gov.