

**STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN DANNY K. DAVIS  
AT THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL WORKFORCE  
AND POSTAL SERVICE, AND THE DISTRICT OF  
COLUMBIA HEARING**

**“An Examination of Federal Employment Practices and  
Policies on hiring ex-offenders”**

**June 10, 2008**

Today’s hearing examines the Federal Government’s policies on hiring ex-offenders. As the author of the Second Chance Act, which was recently signed into law, it goes without saying that I am committed to reducing crime and recidivism in America by supporting proven ex-offender reform and re-entry initiatives.

Every year, nearly 650,000 prisoners are released from federal and state correctional facilities after they have served their time and paid their debt to society for the crimes they committed. In most cases, upon release from prison, many of these individuals return to communities and conditions that are not conducive to developing a new, productive and crime free life. One of the biggest hurdles ex-offenders face is finding adequate employment, whether in the public, private or non-profit sectors. According to the Justice Department’s National Institute of Justice’s 1998, *Successful Job Placement for Ex-Offenders* report, “Ex-offenders have great difficulty re-integrating into society, not because they lack job-seeking experience, a valid work history, or occupational skills; but because many employers refuse to hire individuals with criminal records.”

Consequently, many ex-offenders consistently hit a dead end on the road to workforce re-entry, despite national efforts targeted at improving ex-offender access to permanent, unsubsidized, well-paying jobs. Whether it’s the Department of Labor’s Prisoner Re-entry Program or the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Correctional Education, the Federal Government has clearly taken the steps to develop programs to

assist ex-offenders with becoming contributing members of our society. While these initiatives are complemented by the work of thousands of non-profit and community groups across the country that advocate on behalf of ex-offenders, the fact is that we as a country and employer continue to fall short in our attempt to eliminate barriers to employment for ex-offenders. Aside from select branches of the U.S. military, there is very little evidence that the Federal government is availing itself as a legitimate source of employment for ex-offenders.

It is my hope that today's hearing will serve as a catalyst for changing this predicament by shedding light on exactly what role the Federal Government is playing in employing and hiring ex-offenders. I look forward to the testimony of today's witnesses.