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The Media's Presentation of The Second Chance Act: Funding for Reentry Following Prison
A content analysis

by

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Abstract

The US prison system has multiplied by four since 1980; each year about 730,000 people enter state and federal prisons and 700,000 people exit. As a result of this expansion, there is a massive increase of formerly incarcerated people reentering local communities every year. Budget cuts in prison programs and in local government's social services are causing these individuals to be less educated and less prepared for reintegration; communities are also ill prepared to absorb them. The Second Chance Act was signed into law by President Bush on April 9, 2008. It authorized a pool of about \$393m (renewed in 2009 and 2013) to government agencies and nonprofit community organizations to provide services to the formerly incarcerated following their release from prison or jail. How the media presents reentry and the Second Chance Act and how that depiction affects public perception of the issue requires further examination. Newspaper articles in the LexisNexis Academic database are the basis for this content analysis of print news media coverage of the Second Chance Act. Media framing is important to examine as public attitudes are influenced by newspaper articles, and those attitudes influence government policy.

Introduction

Over the last 30 years, a steep increase in the number of people sentenced to prison in the United States has led to a corresponding steep increase in the ex-offender population (Cole 2001, Gest, 2001). Mass incarceration through the 1980's and 1990's created a reentry crisis evident in the first years of the millennium and continues in this decade. There are over 2.2 million people in prison and jail nationally today, but there never was a coherent national plan for mass incarceration in America (Martin 2013). Consequently, the reintegration of former prisoners is one of the most profound challenges facing American society (Petersilia 2003). President Bush announced, in his 2004 State of the Union address:

“This year, some 600, 000 inmates will be released from prison back into society. We know from long experience that if they can’t find work, or a home, or help, they are much more likely to commit crime and return to prison. . . . America is the land of second chance, and when the gates of the prison open, the path ahead should lead to a better life.”

Following Bush's call to action, the Second Chance Act (SCA) of 2008 was written as the government's response to the reentry crisis. It authorized nearly \$340 million (in its first two years and has since been renewed with proposed funding through 2019) in grants and other means available to state and local government agencies. The nature of the complicated and multi-layered Act is to encourage states to provide employment assistance, substance abuse treatment, housing, family programming, mentoring, victims support, and other services which can help reduce re-offending and violations of probation and parole. It emphasizes that strategies and initiatives must be developed in collaboration with community groups, faith-based organizations, service providers, citizens, victims and formerly incarcerated individuals (Wilkinson 2005).

The importance of American citizens' support for legislative acts such as the SCA must be understood because citizens' political preferences directly influence government and public policy (Gilens 1996). News media coverage of the SCA and reentry will directly affect the attitudes of US citizens towards ex-inmates as they return home. Prior research has not explored what news coverage of the SCA looks like. This content analysis will explore the newspapers' presentation of the SCA. The level of coverage, in terms of number of newspaper articles that mention the SCA, as well as how reentry is framed will be analyzed and used to determine how media framing contributes to US citizens' support of funding for reentry following prison. The SCA is an important piece of legislation; it is critical to explore how media frames it and reentry so support for individuals exiting the prison system can be improved. Newspapers only barely acknowledged the SCA as newsworthy when it was introduced, and in the last six years, even as it was renewed, coverage in newspapers was increasingly less.

Background of the Second Chance Act

The numbers of incarcerated people who will return to their communities is expected to grow (Petersilia 2005). Experts and the BJS state that at least 95% of all state prisoners will be released from prison at some point (Cooper, Durose and Snyder, 2014). Each year approximately 730,000 people enter state and federal prisons and 700,000 people exit. Another seven million are released from shorter terms in jail. A recent BJS study tracked 400,000 state prisoners from 30 states released in 2005. Within three years of release 68 percent (two-thirds) were re-arrested; within five years of release 76 percent were arrested after committing a new crime (Cooper, Durose and Snyder 2014). With recidivism rates rising and communities concerned with public safety, the government's response via the SCA is an important piece of legislation.

The Second Chance Act of 2007, titled HR1593, Community Safety through Recidivism Prevention is a reauthorization of a grant program for reentry of ex-offenders into the community and supplants the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (CSJ 2007). The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) states that the purpose of the SCA is to reduce recidivism, increase public safety, and assist states and communities to address the growing population of inmates returning to communities.

The SCA is divided into two main sections: Title I: Amendments related to the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, and Title II: Enhanced Drug Treatment and Mentoring Grant Programs; there are multiple subsections as well as a “for other purposes” section.

Title I elements include improvements to existing programs and the creation of new programs to improve reentry services. Subtitle A reauthorizes Adult and Juvenile Offender State and Local Reentry Demonstration Projects. These programs, run by a state, a unit of local government, territory, Indian tribe or some combination will focus on four areas: jobs, housing, substance abuse/mental health treatment and families. In much of the government’s literature the SCA is referred to as taking a holistic approach; the reality is the SCA has many components, and this section can be broken down in terms of grants with specific goals:

- Federal demonstration grants to government agencies and nonprofit organizations for safe and successful reintegration of ex-offenders into the community
- To provide employment services, substance abuse treatment, housing, family programming, mentoring, victim services, and methods to improve release and relocation
- To provide mentoring services to adult and juvenile offenders

- To implement family-based treatment programs for incarcerated parents who have minor children
- To provide guidance to the Bureau of Prisons for enhanced reentry planning procedures
- To provide information on health, employment, personal finance, release requirements and community resources

Subtitle B creates several new programs, each with its own funding allocation:

- State, tribal, and local reentry courts, to monitor and provide services for juvenile and adult ex-inmates
- Prosecution drug treatment alternative to prison programs—these may be newly developed and implemented or expanded current programs
- Family based substance abuse treatment—these are designed as alternative to prison programs that include coordination between correctional facilities and government agencies and are programs in residential treatment facilities
- Evaluation and improvement of education at prisons, jails and juvenile facilities
- Technology careers training

Title II of the SCA focuses on Enhanced Drug Treatment and Mentoring Grant Programs, divided into three subtitles with separate funding amounts:

- A. Drug treatment: creates the Offender Reentry Substance Abuse and Criminal Justice Collaboration Program by offering competitive grants to improve drug treatment inside correctional facilities
- B. Mentoring grants to non-profit organizations: funds may be used to mentor adults and juveniles during incarceration and through transition back to the community

C. Administration of justice reforms: this component instructs the Attorney General and the Director of the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to establish a *federal* prisoner reentry strategy

This section also creates a pilot program for elderly and family reunification for non-violent offenders and provides assistance for obtaining identification.

The SCA divides reentry research into four sections:

1. Juvenile and adult offender reentry
2. Parole or post-incarceration supervision violations and revocations
3. Addressing the needs of children of incarcerated parents
4. Depot naltrexone for heroin addiction treatment

Funding for reentry research is approximately \$10 million for each fiscal year of renewal.

The “for other purposes” in the verbiage of the Act includes the establishment of the National Offender Reentry Resource Center (NRRC). Administered by the BJA, of the US Department of Justice (DOJ), the SCA provides education, training and technical assistance to the various agencies who work within reentry. The NRRC is operated by and is a project of the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center. According to the BJA, the NRRC has key project partners with the Urban Institute and other committees of non-profit and service organizations in the reentry field. The primary goal of the Center is to provide information to the service providers and community organizations who deliver services under SCA programming.

Initially introduced in 2005, the SCA was returned to the House of Representatives for amendments before it was finally approved by President Bush on April 9th, 2008. The SCA has

been deemed the first comprehensive legislation that attempts to address the multifaceted problems ex-inmates face following incarceration (Gideon 2010). The bill was supported by more than 200 organizations and has broad bipartisan support, with 113 co-sponsors in the House and 34 in the Senate. It was approved to provide \$191 million for ex-prisoner rehabilitation, reentry and reintegration programs, including \$65 million in grants to state and local governments for reentry initiatives, \$15 million to non-profit organizations for mentor programs and transitional services, \$1 million for state research grants, \$10 million for reentry task forces and drug treatment provisions, \$5 million for career training, \$20 million for education at prisons and jails and \$20 million for prison-based and family treatment programs (Re-Entry Policy Council, 2007). The SCA was renewed in 2009 and again in 2013 (see Table 1). As of July, 2014, the BJA has awarded more than \$250 million, through about 300 grants to government agencies and nonprofit organizations. In President Obama's Fiscal Year 2015 budget, he allocated \$115 million for the SCA; it has not yet been approved by Congress.

SCA grant programs are funded and administered by the Office of Justice Programs in the DOJ. Within the Office of Justice Programs, the Bureau of Justice Assistance awards SCA grants serving adults, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention awards grants serving youth returning from the juvenile correction facilities.

A central goal of the SCA is to encourage collaboration of the criminal justice, public health and social service systems to promote successful reentry by facilitating access to resources and opportunities among partnering agencies. Grant recipients are required to develop a reentry strategic plan not only containing measurable performance outcomes, but must have a 50 percent reduction in recidivism rates over five years (HR 1593). The (BJS) references a national study of

state inmates which found that over the course of their lifetimes, each of the individuals studied had accrued an average of about nineteen charges; 95 percent of them will eventually return home and over two thirds of them will have been rearrested within three years (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002). The goal of the SCA is to look at reentry by way of new and improved, funded, collaborative strategies. For that to happen, communities, families, faith-based and non-profit organizations must work together to help individuals transition from prison, back to their communities as law abiding, tax paying citizens.

Table 1. Second Chance Act Funding

FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14
\$25m	\$100m	\$83m	\$63m	\$67.45m	\$55m

Literature Review

Part 1 Context

According to the BOJ statistics, in 1980, there were fewer than half a million people in US jails and prisons; today there are over two million. Violent crime rates have not increased; in fact it is eighteen percent less today with more than 60 percent of all inmates incarcerated for non-violent offences (Wimsatt 1999). An increased use of prisons in response to crime, combined with radical changes in sentencing laws led to this era of mass incarceration, which is at the core of the fourfold increase of prisoners in the US prison system.

Sentencing policies in this country have changed dramatically over the past generation. New gang laws, drug laws, three-strike laws, mandatory minimum sentences, and Truth in Sentencing laws which took away judges' discretion in sentencing, combined with drastic

changes to parole and community supervision have caused more people to go to prison for longer sentences and had an especially devastating effect in minority communities. Incarcerating more people requires building new prisons; the cost of construction has forced governments to cut budgets for schools, after-school programs, drug treatment, job training and many social programs that also especially affect poor and minority communities. Inside the newly built prisons, policymakers in many states cut funding for programs and services such as education and skills trainings. Ex-inmates released today are less prepared, offered less assistance in their reintegration and face an increasing likelihood of being returned to prison (Petersilia 2003).

Since President Bush's call to action, the issue of reentry has received increased attention from government officials, community organizations and academics. In January, 2011, US Attorney General Eric Holder established the Reentry Council, a federal interagency group with lofty, generalized goals; its creation was also a component of the SCA, satisfying the requirement of collaboration among criminal justice, public health and social service agencies.

The dominant narrative of contemporary American penal culture holds that the US stands unmatched in the western world in its harsh treatment of lawbreakers (Green 2013). Criminal justice policy has been guided by the "tough on crime" era of the last 30 years. The penal harm theory (Clear 1997) was born out of this ideology; it states that inmates should endure additional pain and suffering and not just have their rights taken in order to make the punishment deliberately harder. Upon leaving prison, the individual, in theory, has paid their debt to society, yet the punishment continues through the reentry process and beyond.

In his review of the SCA, editor of *Federal Sentencing Reporter*, Michael O'Hear applauds the "reentry movement" and points out the past attempts of legalism's hold on penal

law and policy. Strict adherence to the law (legalism) has consisted of astonishing harshness in sentencing (mass incarceration) and a tendency to view offenders as undifferentiated, willful lawbreakers not as individual human beings with unique needs and limitations (O'Hear 2007). Increased attention towards reentry helped SCA legislation come to fruition. The way the media frames the SCA and how the public perceives the issue as a consequence requires further examination.

Part 2 Theory

This content analysis of media presentation follows Martin Gilens' (1999) study of the relationship between public misperceptions of race and poverty and the American news media. Gilens' analyzed three weekly news magazines over forty-five years and looked specifically at the racial content in their coverage of poverty. Gilens claims that media coverage shapes public perceptions, which in turn affects public policy. He argues that the images used in the portrayal of poverty in the national news do not accurately reflect the reality of poverty in America and those news media distortions in turn drive public misperceptions about race and poverty.

The logic of Gilens' work rests on the concept of media *framing* (Iyengar, 1991). Iyengar posits that most Americans possess little information about current issues and events but, simultaneously, they possess policy preference on a wide range of political issues. The way a news story is framed will profoundly influence "decision outcomes." At a general level, framing refers to subtle alterations in the statement or presentation of judgment and choice problems. As a result of those alterations, a change in decision outcomes is called the "framing effect." Significant framing effects have been demonstrated in experimental studies (Iyengar, 1991.) In media presentation of reentry, and specifically in relation to Gilens content analysis, newspapers'

framing of reentry may affect citizens' and communities' willingness to support SCA programs. This support, or lack of is epitomized in areas such as employment and housing and in overall acceptance, which is reflected by an ex-inmate's ability to actually find employment or rent an apartment as a felon.

Joan Petersilia, winner of the Stockholm Prize in Criminology asserts that reentry is one of the most profound challenges facing American society (Petersilia 2003). Petersilia has spent over thirty years studying crime and public policy; her research on parole reform, prisoner reintegration and sentencing policy has fueled changes in policies throughout the nation. It is important for US citizens to care about reentry policy, according to Petersilia, because of challenges which are different today than they were twenty or thirty years ago. In a co-authored article with Urban Institute Senior Fellow, Jeremy Travis in *Crime and Delinquency* (2001), they argue that from a number of policy perspectives, the age-old issue of prisoner reintegration has taken on a critical importance with the most profound changes placing a new demand on parole and community-based supervision. They attribute these changes to three primary areas; the growth in imprisonment rates, the fragmentation of sentencing philosophies and the weakening of parole. These three developments, over the last twenty years are at the root of a system that is no longer effective. "More people are going to prison under differing sentencing philosophies and returning home through a system of reintegrating that has diminished capacity to perform that function and now serves more to return reentry failures to prison's front door"(Petersilia & Travis 2001).

One challenge for policymakers is that the public will not support community-based programs until they have been shown to "work," and they will not have an opportunity to work

without sufficient funding and research (Petersilia, 2000). Media framing of parole and reentry become increasingly important when public policy and new research relies on community support;

Experts in the field of criminal justice agree that reducing crime requires a collaborative effort and must include a focus on improving the lives of ex-inmates post-prison. American criminal justice policy has been dominated by a legalist mind-set (consistent severe penal response to deter crime and reinforce law-based moral norms (O'Hear 2007). The legalist approach to criminal justice is contrasted with a harm-reduction approach which deliberately avoids moral condemnation and recognizes that criminal acts may sometimes represent a failing of society as much as a failing of the criminal. This content analysis searches news articles to determine how reentry is framed in the media.

Part 3 Empirical Evidence

In his poverty in the media study, Gilens found that over 50% of the images of people shown in articles about poverty are African American. In reality, the average percentage of African Americans among the poor during this period was 29.3% (Gilens 1999.) He argues that news media distortions coincide with public misperceptions about race and poverty and that both are biased in ways which reflect negatively on the poor in general and on poor African Americans in particular (Gilens 1996). Gilens concluded that the public dramatically misunderstands the racial composition of America's poor, which has consequences harmful to both the poor and to the Black communities. Media presentation of the SCA affects public opinion and attitudes in a different but related context. Services to the American poor and those reintegrating into communities following incarceration nation-wide require support from US

citizens. Public policy is driven by public opinion and those opinions are influenced by media presentation of the issue.

Across the country and increasingly throughout the Western world (Wacquant 1999), punitive criminal-justice policies have a grossly disproportionate impact on racial minorities (Bobo 2006). When the relationship between racial disparities in incarceration and citizen's acceptance of punitive policies was studied, the outcomes mimicked Gilens' results (Hetey 2014). In this study, when the penal institution was represented as "more Black," people were more concerned about crime and expressed a greater acceptance of punitive policies than when the penal institution was represented as "less Black" (Hetey 2014).

Levels of support for the SCA can be determined by a number of different ways. Public opinion surveys are one useful yet fallible method; there have been worthwhile surveys which looked at support for transitioning ex-offenders. A 2006 study examined attitudes of US voters toward prisoner rehabilitation and reentry policies (Krisberg and Marchionna 2006). Of those polled, by strong majorities, US voters understand the difficulties faced by ex-inmates in terms of basic needs and they also agree that receiving communities suffer from a lack of preparedness to receive people post incarceration. Only 7% of those polled were not in favor of planning for reentry. This survey was conducted two years prior to the SCA legislation; four in five respondents supported the proposed SCA, with support closely divided between strongly (41%) and somewhat (38%). In comparison, one in seven (14%) oppose the bill, while 8% are not sure. When asked about the pending SCA, 78% were in strong support; of those almost half expressed strong support.

Another public opinion study that same year looked at public attitudes toward rehabilitation, punitiveness and support for the Second Chance Act (Loveland 2006). This New York State and Tri-State Region poll found about 83% of the public is supportive of the SCA and thus support of ex-offenders' rehabilitation and reintegration. Loveland concluded that knowledge of public attitudes toward prisoners' rehabilitation and reintegration, and reentry programs can help policymakers approach the problem effectively.

How the media presents reentry by way of the SCA can affect levels of support for reentry strategies and public policies. This content analysis of newspapers' framing of the SCA complements prior studies of public support of reentry, and also relates to recent sociological theories of punishment, penalty¹ and a shift in penal philosophy. How newspapers frame the issue will affect the level of support for ex-inmates in their communities, which will directly affect recidivism rates and public safety.

Study aim and hypothesis

This study seeks to examine the media's presentation of the Second Chance Act and its accompanying narrative of reentry with the goal of understanding how information about reentry is presented by newspapers to the American public. Using a content analysis of newspaper articles, a level of supportive, neutral or negative presentation will be observed. The main research question which guides this content analysis is:

¹ "Penalty" as used by Michael Hallett in *Reentry to What? Theorizing Prisoner Reentry in the Jobless Future*, draws from the work of Foucault, David Garland's classic statement on the meaning of "penalty" refers to the complex of laws, processes, discourses, and institutions which are involved in this sphere and is a synonym for legal punishment in this broad sense" (1990 p.10, fn12). He goes on to say that "Penalty communicates meaning not just about crime and punishment but also about power, authority, legitimacy, normality, morality, personhood, social relations, and a host of other tangible matters" (1990, p252). See *Punishment and Modern Society*

RQ1 “How do newspapers in the US, report information about the Second Chance Act of 2008?”

Hypotheses that test more specific questions are:

H1: There will be more coverage of The Second Chance Act during funding renewal years (2008, 2009, and 2013) than in non-renewal years.

H2: Local newspapers will contain more coverage of The Second Chance Act than national newspapers.

H3: There will be more quotes from the federal government than any other source.

H4: There will be more mention of saving money than mention of reducing crime or improving lives.

Methods

Newspapers were chosen because they are widely read, are both local and national in coverage and distribution and they have been published continuously for many decades. Using the LexisNexis Academic database, newspapers in the United States between the years 2007-2014 were searched for articles that contained the terms “Second Chance Act” and “prison.” The search yielded 195 articles; of those 143 were included. Articles were eliminated for the following reasons: they were published by non-US newspapers, they were about The Second Chances Act (a marriage legislative act), they were press releases or legal press releases or contained only incidental mention of the term “second chance act.” Examples of national papers include *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post*; examples of local papers include the *Oregonian* and the *Daily News*; alternative papers such as the *Portland Mercury* were not

indexed by LexisNexis and therefore were not included. A code book was created to identify the components of each article to be analyzed (See Appendix A).

Articles were coded by year of publication and word count, type of newspaper (local or national) and article type (hard news, opinion, editorial or letter to the editor.) The type of article was listed in LexisNexis and was recorded along with the word count and year of publication.

The sources or the people quoted in each article were classified by the following types: government (federal or local government), expert/academic, community organizations, ex-offender or program participant, faith-based, Department of Corrections or other. A count variable represents how many times the same source is quoted. If there were multiple sources, each was noted and if there were multiple citations from any source, the number of quotes was recorded.

The coding category of “positive individual outcomes” tracks the description of potential program services such as skill development, services to ex-inmates, drug treatment, job training or employment finding services, housing, education, mentoring or parenting classes or programs. If more than one of these services is mentioned in the same article, then the number of mentions is recorded. Other positive individual outcomes are recorded as a text variable, listed by name and included in the total.

The variable “positive structural outcome” represents information present in an article that describes outcomes for society as a whole. These outcomes include mentions of saving money, reducing crime, reducing recidivism and/or improving lives. If the article has specific mention of the term “improving lives,” it was coded as such; the mention of a program designed to improve the lives of ex-inmates by including treatment for addiction or job training is also

included in improving lives. Other positive structural outcomes are recorded as a text variable and listed by name.

The amount of SCA grant award is recorded as a dollar figure. The number of people served by a program created using a grant from the SCA is recorded as a number. Mention of success of a program is recorded as either present or not present. When a program is specifically named as created and funded by an SCA grant, the name is recorded as a text variable. If a program created is specifically for women or youth, the mention is recorded. If there is more than one agency mentioned in any article, including government and social service agencies, or any combination of organizations it is coded as “multiple agencies.”

When there is mention of an ex-inmate or an ex-inmate’s family for any reason, it is coded as a number representing how many times the ex-inmate or ex-inmate’s family is mentioned. If a candidate is mentioned in an article, the number of mentions of the candidate is recorded.

Mention of race or racial disparity is recorded including a text variable; if race is mentioned it is coded as present in the article; the specific race is recorded as a text variable and if racial disparity or inequity based on race is noted, the races mentioned are recorded as a text variable.

Findings

Table 1 displays descriptive characteristics of the sample population of newspaper articles. Of the 143 total included articles, 63% are hard news (N=90), and 28% are opinion/editorial (N=40). Only 4 % are letters to the editor (N=6) and 4% are other (N=6).

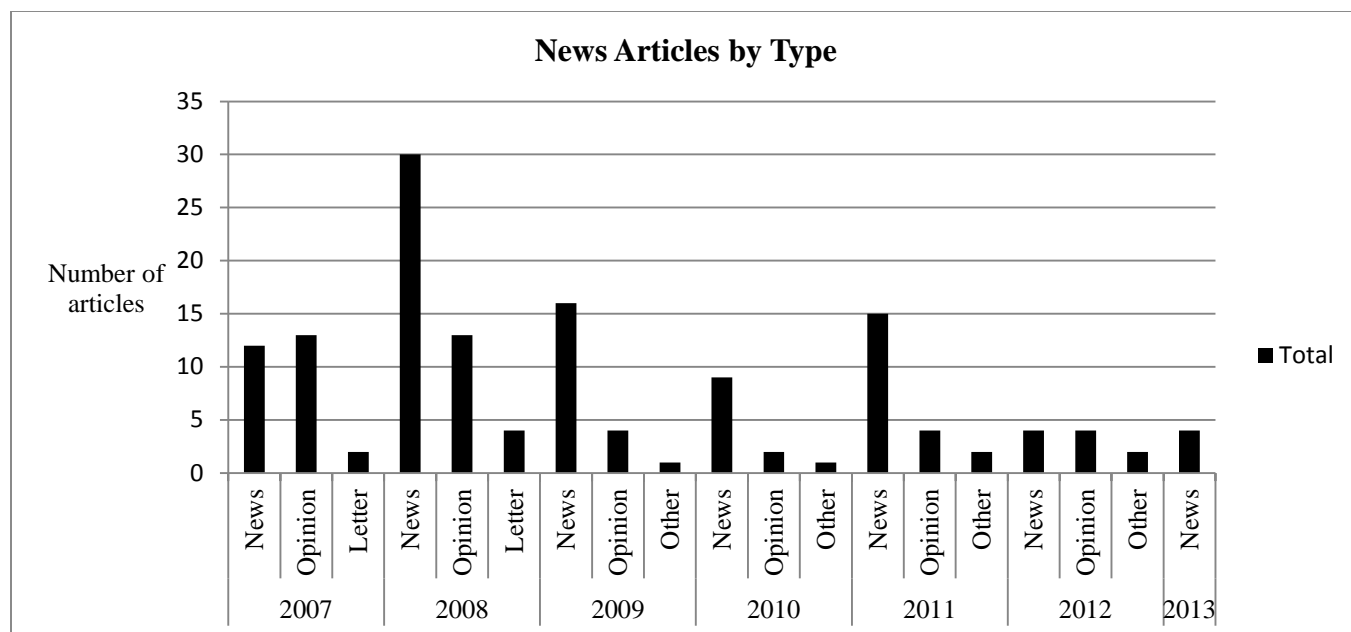
Table 1 Descriptives

	N	
Average word count	661	
Local newspaper	30%	41
National newspaper	70%	101
Type of article	N	
News	63%	90
Op/Ed	28%	40
Letter	4%	6
Other	4%	6

Figure 1 contains the breakdown of article type by year. There was more conversation during 2007, the year it was introduced (N=27) than during the most recent renewal year of 2013 when there were only four news articles and zero op/ed or letters. In 2008, the year the SCA was signed into law, the largest number of related newspaper articles was published (N=47). During the he next two years since its introduction, the SCA received the most attention from reporters in terms of opinion and editorial pieces; since those years, very few opinions have earned a spot in the newspaper.

HI states there will be more news reporting during SCA funding renewal years (2008, 2009, 2013) with limited data during non-renewal years. In 2007, there were 26 articles, in 2008, the first year of funding there were 46 articles. The next year, 2009, the SCA was renewed and there were 20 articles; the following year, 2010, coverage was reduced by half and there were 11 total articles in newspapers. In 2011, coverage increased though funding was not renewed with 20 articles that year. 2012 saw 10 articles and 2013, a funding renewal year there were a total of 4 articles in national and local newspapers combined.

Figure 1 Articles by year and type



The sources of information about the SCA for the included articles are illustrated in Table

3. Local and federal government officials are responsible for the majority of the news with local government as a source in 56% (N=79) of the total articles and federal government sources at 32% (N=45). Community organizations operating programs using SCA funds and participants from such programs are sources in about one third of the articles. Other sources include community members and employers.

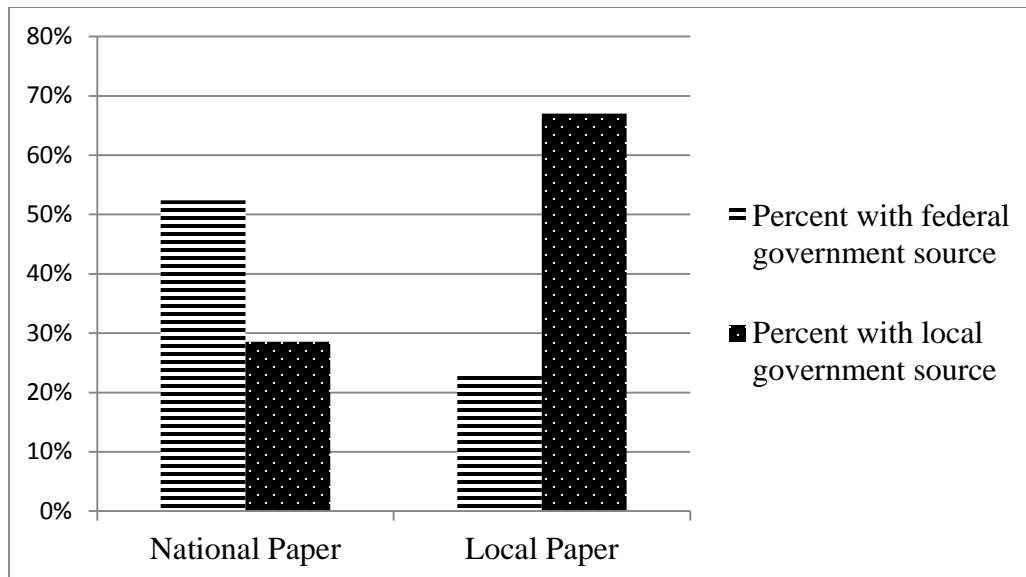
H2 stated local newspapers will contain more coverage of the SCA than national newspapers; local newspapers have significantly more ($p < .05$) articles than national papers about the SCA. Also notable is that local government sources are the primary sources in local papers. In both local and national newspapers, there are statistically more ($p < .05$) government representatives as sources than any other source.

Table 3 Sources

	Of total articles	N
Federal Government	32%	45
Local Government	56%	79
Experts/Academics	32%	45
Community Organizations	27%	39
Program participant	23%	32
Faith based Organization	10%	14
Department of Corrections	18%	26
Other	24%	34

H3 suggests that federal government sources provide most of the information about the SCA and its related programs. When federal and local sources were compared, there were significantly more federal government sources ($p < .05$) in national newspapers with federal government as a source in more than half of the articles. In local papers however, local government provided significantly more information ($p < .05$) with almost 70% of the articles in local papers reporting information from local government and 23% (in local papers) coming from federal sources.

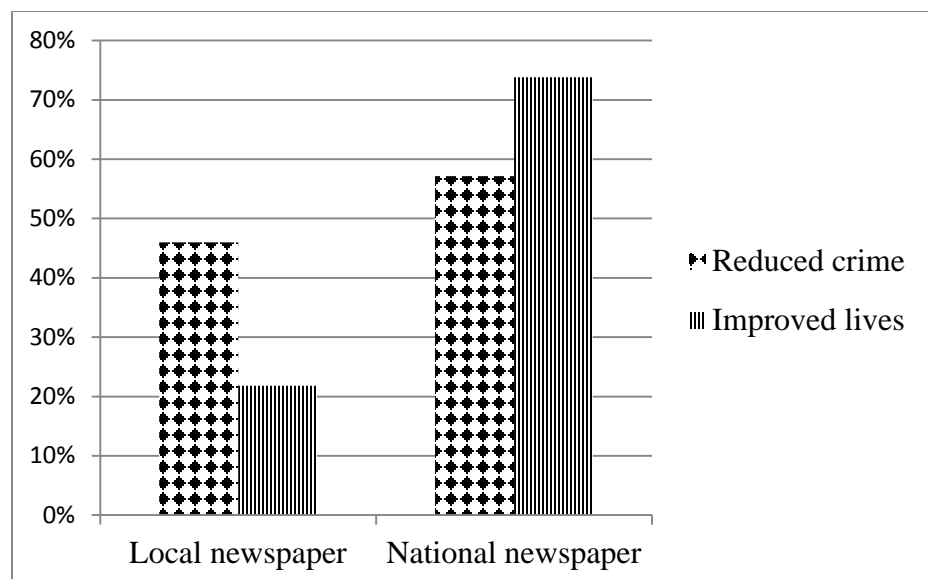
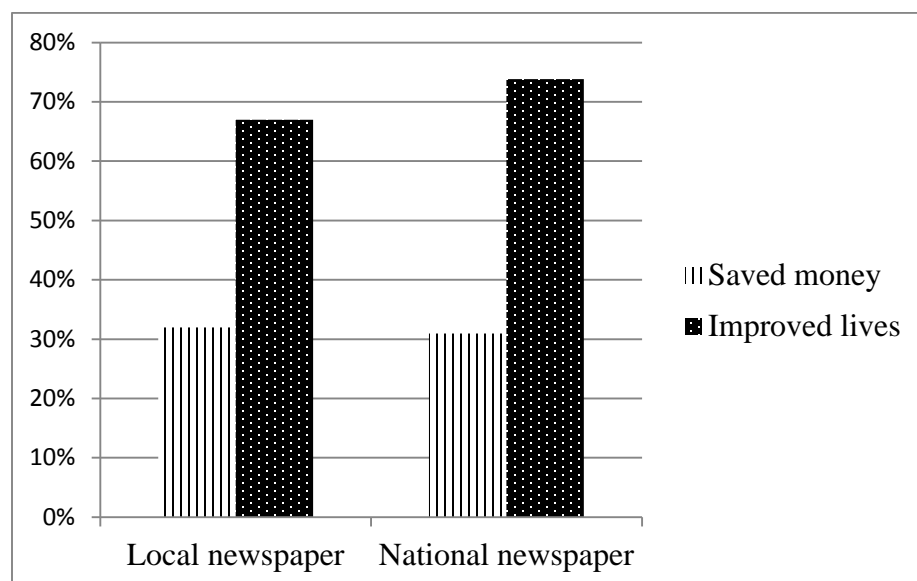
One other thing to note is that expert and academic sources are cited in 32% ($N=46$) of the total articles. Section 3 of HR 1593 authorizes \$10,000,000 for 2009 and 2010 (each) for research in many areas of pre and post reentry. These studies are not cited in the included articles but the funding has produced a network of scholars focused on the SCA—and able to provide expert quotes to news media.

Figure 2 Federal and local government sources

H4 compares saving money and reducing crime to improving lives in terms of the way the Second Chance Act is discussed in the newspaper. Figures 3 and 4 illustrate this comparison and also compared the local newspapers' report to the national newspapers' version.

While *H4* predicted more discussion of both saved money and reduced crime than of improved lives as a benefit of the SCA, in fact, there was significantly more ($p < .05$) discussion of improved lives than of saved money in national newspapers. In local papers, saved money is mentioned in 32% ($N=45$) and in national papers saved money is mentioned in 31% ($N=44$). Improved lives is mentioned in 67% ($N=95$) of the included local newspaper articles, and in 74% ($N=105$) of the included national newspaper articles.

Reduced crime was discussed significantly more ($p < .05$) than improved lives in local papers though not in national papers. Reduced crime was mentioned in 46% ($N=65$) of the included articles in local newspapers. In national papers, reduced crime was mentioned in 57% ($N=81$) of the included articles.

Figure 3 Reduced crime vs. improved lives**Figure 4 Saved money vs. improved lives**

One way of determining a positive, neutral or negative report about the SCA is to look at potential positive individual outcomes of programs created or operated using SCA grants.

Illustrated in Table 3, discussion of positive outcomes occurred in slightly more than 75% (N=76) of the articles and was coded as services to ex-inmates. Job training or assistance with employment activities is mentioned in 59% (N=84) of the total articles; treatment for addictions is discussed in 44% (N=62) and assistance with housing is mentioned in 35% (N=50) of the articles. The SCA specifically states that job training, addictions treatment and housing assistance are at the top of the priorities in terms of providing grant money to programs which offer such services. Skill development and education, which each are mentioned in just under 40% (N=57) of the articles, include reading skills, computer training, GED or other post-secondary education. Mentoring, which is a central part of the SCA in terms of what services the grant money will provide is mentioned in 22% (N=31) of the articles.

Discussion

The results reported here suggest that there is limited coverage of the SCA and of ex-prisoner reentry in the newspaper on both a local and national level. Before discussion about how the media presents the issue it is important to note that coverage of the SCA decreased by half each year after the SCA was signed into law in 2008, even during the funding renewal years of 2009 and 2013. This is a statement about the level of importance that is assigned to reentry by the media.

How the media presents the SCA and the issue of reentry is different in local newspapers than it is in national newspapers. The results from the available articles indicate a difference in the media's framing of the SCA and the issue of reentry between local and national newspapers. Citizens are concerned about reducing crime in their communities and the local reporting reflects this concern. Nationally, the focus of news reporting is more about improving the lives of the formerly incarcerated, which is a reflection of prepared news statements from representatives of

the Federal government. Saving money is of relatively equal importance in both local and national reports, with improved lives as a prioritized intended outcome both locally and nationally. The larger issue though is the need for a general shift in discussion about *people* exiting the prison system and returning to the community, and the culture of punishment, which would change and include conversation and planning, by collaborative partners, for how ex-inmates reenter society.

The local reporting of the Second Chance Act legislation seems to emphasize reducing crime more heavily than improving the lives of ex-inmates. In the House Judiciary Committee Report on the SCA (2007), three purposes of the legislation are identified: to reduce recidivism, increase public safety and help state and local governments better address the growing population of ex-offenders returning to their communities (HR Rep 110-140); there is no mention in this report of President Bush's call to help former inmates *lead a better life*. News reporters using federal government sources are merely repeating press releases rather than looking to social service, community agencies and ex-inmates themselves for progress about how their lives have been improved by increased SCA programs.

Federal government representatives provided more information as a source than community organizations and experts who are the people in the trenches of reentry. Fostering closer collaborations between universities and criminal justice agencies as well as making randomized controlled trials the rule rather than the exception in the field of offender rehabilitation (Farabee, 2007) are changes that would allow more expert information about reentry to become newsworthy information and would allow reporters to frame their stories in terms of results of expert studies, rather than regurgitating press releases. This concept combines

collaborative efforts, using the research of experts in the field of reentry, focusing on the intended goal of the legislation as stated by the President.

Table 4 Positive individual outcomes

Positive individual outcomes		N
Skill development	39%	55
Services to ex-inmates	75%	107
Drug treatment	44%	63
Job training or employment assistance	59%	84
Housing	36%	51
Education	34%	48
Mentoring	23%	32
Parenting	6%	9
Health services	13%	19
Mental health services	23%	32

Though not included in the hypotheses, race was mentioned in a small percentage of the articles, most often in the context of racial disparity. In the studied articles, race is mentioned when the SCA was first introduced, and for the next several years; mention of race declines so much that in both 2010 and 2013 there was only 1 article each year mentioning race. 2008 is the year race is discussed most frequently; coincidentally, it was the year President Obama won his first election and is also the year the reauthorization of the Second Chance Act began to provide funding via grants to communities. It is interesting to note so few newspaper articles that discuss prisoner reentry mention race, which is in stark contrast to the disparities in sentencing, and the importance of bringing race into the conversation.

Figure 6 Race

Year	Mention of race	Mention of Racial Disparity
2007	5	0
2008	12	9
2009	2	1
2010	1	1
2011	4	3
2012	2	2
2013	1	1
Grand Total	26	17

Conclusion

Whether the public favors reducing crime, saving money or improving lives, American citizens generally support legislation which provides money to fund reentry in their community. Media framing of the SCA contributes to that support, and it provides the basis for how American citizens form opinions about public policy. This study suggested that collaboration between the agencies which are providing services to ex-inmates and their families and the local government must become stronger in order to comprehensively improve the lives of people as they reenter the community, which will both save taxpayers money and reduce crime. When the government and the media view reentry in terms of people first, and the goal of improving citizens' lives becomes a priority and a shift in penal philosophy can take place.

In order for the public to view the formerly incarcerated as human beings, the framing that news reporters use is crucial. Gilens concluded that the media are instrumental in shaping our understanding of the social world we inhabit; this study furthers that claim. When local newspapers report about reentry programs in their community which use Second Chance Act

funds, and cite social service organizations and participants in those programs, the human element often lacking in newspaper articles about reentry can be present.

Media content has been shown to affect the importance that viewers, or in this case, readers attach to political issues. Given the extremely limited coverage the SCA received beyond the very first years of this crucial legislation, change appears to be both radically needed and extremely slow in coming. The SCA has the potential to help advance attempts to reduce recidivism while improving the lives of ex-inmates. Framing newspaper reports about reentry in terms of people, who will be returning home following prison, can contribute to increased citizen support for reentry. It is important that the media discuss reentry in terms of people- mothers, fathers, sons and daughters, neighbors and community members.

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Appendix A Code Book

Search Term: Second Chance Act AND prison

The Nexis search returns 185 articles for the period 1/1/2007-1/1/2014.

The search term is not 100% accurate as some articles are from Canada, and some address the Second Chances Act, and are therefore not relevant to this project. In addition, government press releases will not be included in this study and 6 % are press releases included in this search.

Coding Instructions

Word Count:

Use the word count provided by Nexis if the whole piece is about the Second Chance Act; if it is a collection of letters or several smaller pieces use Word to run a word count.

Year of Publication:

- 2007
- 2008
- 2009
- 2010
- 2011
- 2012
- 2013
- 2014

Hard news: 0/1

- Hard news = articles that cover the Second Chance Act, dollar amount of grant awards, information about programs created or supported as a result of the grant

Soft news: 0/1

- Soft news = articles about fund raisers for Second Chance Act programs, auctions and the like.

Incidental Mention: 0/1

Mention of SCA without including facts or data. When an article is coded as incidental mention, coding stops here.

Type of publication: 1/2/3

Determine the publication source of the newspaper

1. National=New York Times, Wall Street Journal, USA Today, Washington Post
2. Local=Oregonian, Baltimore Sun, Roanoke Times
3. Other=Chronicle of Higher Education, Right Vision News

Type of article: 1/2/3/4

Distinguish between news articles, op-ed pieces, letters

1. News
2. Op/ed
3. Letter
4. Other

Sources:

Distinguish between the source or sources of the data provided. More than one source may be cited.

- **Government: 0/N**
- **Federal: 0/N**
- **Local: 0/N**

- **Expert Academic: 0/N**
 - **Community organization: 0/N**
 - **Program participant (ex-inmate): 0/N**
 - **Religious or Faith Based: 0/N**
 - **Department of Corrections: 0/N**
 - **Other: 0/N**
- **Text Variable:** If other source is coded, list the source.
 - **N= number**

Positive Individual Outcomes:

For individual positive outcomes, you're coding information present in an article that describes the potential positive outcomes of SCA programs created by grant money for ex-offenders themselves. If there is no mention of the positive outcomes listed below, code 0, if there is 1 sentence about positive outcomes, code 1. If there are multiple mentions within the article of each listed positive outcome code for how many paragraphs contain discussion of that positive outcome.

- Look for information that fits into these categories:

Skill development: 0/1/N

- A program funded by a grant from the SCA will teach a (or multiple) skill(s)
 - Ex 1: "Barnstable County Sheriff James Cummings announced this week that his office has received a \$350,000 federal grant to establish a culinary arts certificate program at the Bourne jail and help inmates re-enter the community."
 - Ex 2: "In addition, they get instruction in job readiness, math and computer literacy, and life skills."

- **Services to ex-inmates: 0/1/N** These are medical, financial, case management

Ex 1. “The grant will fund a discharge planner, a case manager and a transitional health care coordinator to help inmates prepare for leaving the jail”

Ex. 2 “Services include case management, education, substance abuse treatment, family reunification and housing to reduce the recidivism rate in Palm Beach County.”
- **Drug Treatment: 0/1/N** A program funded by a grant from the SCA provides drug treatment

Ex. 1. “Thanks to grants of around \$600,000, Mountain Comprehensive Care is now offering a family-based substance abuse program at the jail.”

Ex. 2. “The grant will fund a discharge planner, a case manager and a transitional health care coordinator to help inmates prepare for leaving the jail, Perry said.”
- **Job Training and/or help finding a job: 0/1/N** This would include clothing for job search, resume building, job matching

Ex. 1. “The funding flows from the Second Chance Act of 2007, which addresses the challenges of reentry after incarceration... through the county's Workforce Investment Board, which, according to its website, helps "businesses find the right people and people find the right jobs."

Ex. 2. “Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry seeks to deliver case management services to returning individuals, which would include linking them to services including job training, housing, substance abuse treatment, and health care.”

- **Housing: 0/1/N** This would include “Ready to Rent” programs and certificates, classes for becoming responsible tenants and actual money for rent and deposits
Ex. 1. “Currently, Second Chances funds projects in a diverse range of areas, from parenting classes to affordable housing.”
Ex. 2. “Jones said S-CAP workers go with participants to help them find housing, employment or whatever else they need.”
- **Education: 0/1/N** This would include GED, literacy or college
Ex. 1. “By providing parolees access to a two-year education, job training, counseling and substance abuse treatment program through slow integration into the community, Richards aims for Project 180 also to save taxpayer money while improving the lives of many.”
Ex. 2. “This team will assist the inmate with education, job training and housing after release from the jail.”
- **Mentoring: 0/1/N** This includes specific mentor programs where ex-inmates are provided with a mentor, or a mentoring program is created using SCA funds
Ex. 1. “Defenders of the mayor's re-entry efforts highlight programs the city has implemented to provide ex-offenders with mentors and place them in temporary jobs to strengthen their prospects for full-time employment.”
Ex. 2. “Pearsall said about 80 parents will likely be involved in the mentor program, which will also refer them to other community resources and other Fighting Back programs that will benefit them.”

- **Parenting: 0/1/N** This includes parenting classes and programs that directly address ex-inmates with their children
 - Ex. 1. “Through our provision of substance abuse treatment, as well as parenting and anger management classes, we feel that we can jointly provide needed services to persons who are not only in the inmate population, but are citizens who will ultimately return to Floyd County as hopefully productive members of the community and reunite with their families and not return to incarcerated status,”
 - Ex. 2. “The primary focus of the grant is Project Reconnect, which is designed to reconnect incarcerated women with their children.”
- **Health Services: 0/1/N** This includes risk reduction, HIV/Aids/Hepatitis C education and testing, pre-natal, diet, exercise and end of life or hospice
- **Mental Health: 0/1/N** Any mention of mental health services is a positive outcome and coded as 1. Dual diagnosis programs are coded as other positive outcome

Positive Structural Outcomes

For structural positive outcomes, you’re coding information present in an article that describes the potential positive structural outcomes of SCA programs created by grant money for society as a whole. If there is no mention of the positive outcomes listed below, code 0, if there is 1 sentence about positive outcomes, code 1. If there are multiple mentions within the article of each listed positive outcome code for how many paragraphs contain discussion of that positive outcome.

- **Saving Money: 0/1/N** For positive outcomes, you're coding based on a mention of a dollar amount that represents savings to the community, county, state or nation. This includes any mention of savings using dollar figures or general statements that concern money, earned or not

Ex. 1. "The reduction saved the states something in the neighborhood of \$150 million in corrections costs last year alone"

Ex. 2 "Fiscal hawks have, almost inadvertently, recognized that sometimes taking care of people saves money.

Ex. 3 "And save taxpayers money by working to ensure that released offenders become productive members of our society"
- **Saving or Improving Lives: 0/1/N** For positive outcomes, you're coding based on a mention of lives saved as a benefit of an SCA program

Ex. 1. "Richards aims for Project 180 also to save taxpayer money while improving the lives of many

Ex. 2 "Task force leaders believe the community will save money and human capital if it can help felons establish themselves as productive citizens and keep them from re-offending."
- **Reducing recidivism: 0/1/N** For positive outcomes, you're coding based on a mention of reducing recidivism as a benefit of an SCA program

Ex. 1. "Encouraged by the federal Second Chance Act of 2008, which aims to promote correctional reform, several states have cut recidivism by giving newly released inmates access to drug treatment or mental health care"

Ex. 2. "This is really a faith-based approach trying to help reduce recidivism"

- **Other Positive Outcome: 0/1 + Text**

Text Variable: what is the positive outcome mentioned? How often is this other outcome mentioned? Dual diagnosis (mental health and addiction ONLY) is coded as other with additional text variable

Amount of Award: 0/\$N

If the article has no specific mention of the amount of grant money the state or county received, it is a 0. If the article does mention the amount of grant money, enter dollar amount.

Ex 1: “The area's Reentry Coalition, which received about \$636,800 in operating funds last year from a federal Second Chance Act Adult Offender Recovery Program grant.”

Ex. 2: “The group has obtained a federal Second Chance Act Adult Offender Reentry Planning Grant for just under \$40,000”

Quantity Served: 0/N

If the article does not mention how many people will be served by the grant, it is a 1 coded 0. If the article does mention the number of people to be served, enter the quantity mentioned

Ex. 1. “That money goes to fund a wide net of support for as many as 200 inmates per year, including services local probation and parole agencies can't provide, Kaplan said.

Transition or Reentry Program Information: 0/1 This includes any program, named or not that is created or funded using SCA funds.

If the article does not mention any program created or using SCA funds, it is a 0.

If the article has specific mention of a program created or using SCA funds, it is a 1.

- **Text Variable:** If there is mention of a program, define program by type
 - Treatment for Addiction
 - Parenting/Family
 - Cognitive Skills such as Anger Management, Communication Skills, Stress Management or Problem Solving.
 - Support Group
 - Parenting
 - Housing such as “Ready to Rent”
 - Job Skills, Resume Building
 - Mentor
 - Religious
 - Other

Inmate’s Family: 0/1

If the article has specific mention of the inmate’s family in any respect it is a 1.

4. Ex.1 “and provided them and their families with the resources necessary to successfully rejoin society.”
5. Ex. 2 “thanks to grants of around \$600,000, Mountain Comprehensive Care is now offering a family-based substance abuse program at the jail.”

Women’s Program: 0/1

- If the program is exclusively for women it is a 1

Youth Program: 0/1

- If the program is exclusively for youth it is a 1

Multiple Agencies: 0/1

If more than one agency works in a community, using SCA funding to provide reentry services, it is a 1.

- Ex. 1. “clothing will come from donations through the Transitional Center while skills training will be provided by staff and volunteers at the half-way house”

- Ex. 2. “Goodwill is providing a full-time employment specialist, who will also help the newly released convicts follow Corrections guidelines for where they can reside. Child and Family Services will help assess offenders for substance abuse problems. NAMI will provide mental health recovery coaches, one for men and one for women.”

Ex-Inmate Mention: 0/1

If there is mention of a specific or particular ex-inmate, it is a 1.

Candidate Mention: 0/1

If the article is primarily about a candidate who either supported the SCA or did not support the SCA, it is a 1.

Race: 0/1

If there is any mention of race or races, it is a 1.

Text Variable: If there is mention of race, enter the race or races mentioned.

Racial Disparity: 0/1

If there is mention of racial disparity, or inequality based on race, it is a 1.

Text Variable: If there is mention of race, enter the race or races mentioned.

Success of Program: 0/1/2

If the article mentions program success, it is a 1.

If the article mentions lack of success, or failure of a program, it is a 2