

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

CONGRESS FUNDS MENTALLY ILL OFFENDER TREATMENT AND CRIME REDUCTION ACT

The FY 2006 Science, State, Justice Appropriations bill, H.R. 2862, which is headed for the President's desk for signature, contains \$5 million in funding for the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act. Although this is a far cry from the \$50 million authorized in the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act, it is nevertheless a sign that Congress and the President value the importance of jail diversion, correctional mental health treatment and community re-entry services in a time when funding for new programs is hard to come by.

The Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act encourages mental health and criminal justice systems to work together in devising new, more effective ways to assist the mentally ill. NAPO strongly supported this legislation and worked hard with Senator DeWine and his staff to fight for its passage last year. It was a significant victory when President Bush signed the bill into law on October 30, 2004. NAPO is happy to announce the continued funding of this important Act in the FY 2006 Appropriations bill.