WHEREAS, the Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that more than 16 percent of adults incarcerated in U.S. jails and prisons have a mental illness, and

WHEREAS, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reports that more than 20 percent of youth in the juvenile justice system have serious mental health problems and many more have co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders, and

WHEREAS, the majority of these individuals have illnesses or disorders that are responsive to treatment programs located in the community, and

WHEREAS, the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment & Crime Reduction Act was introduced in Congress to provide local communities the resources they need to develop innovative solutions to avoid the criminalization of those with mental illness, and

WHEREAS, the legislation creates planning and implementation grants for communities to offer treatment and other services—including housing, education and job placement—to mentally ill offenders, and

WHEREAS, grants under the legislation would allow for the establishment and expansion of community-based treatment programs, in adult and juvenile detention facilities, jail treatment programs, and transitional services, and

WHEREAS, grants under the legislation can be utilized to enhance training for criminal justice personnel and mental health system personnel who must understand how to respond appropriately to this population;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT

the American Jail Association urge Congress to adopt the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT

the American Jail Association supports full funding of the provisions of the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act.

Adopted on May 3, 2008, by the AJA Board of Directors in Sacramento, California.