

WASHINGTON - U.S. Rep. Spencer Bachus (R-AL) announced today that Shelby County is receiving a federal grant to establish a juvenile drug court that will help alleviate overcrowded jails and punish non-violent drug offenders while helping them kick their drug habits.

"Rehabilitation is a key in returning these individuals to a law-abiding and productive lifestyle. This drug court will help improve public safety by reducing drug abuse and jail overcrowding. All of us are better off if our jails and prisons are available for violent offenders instead of warehousing non-violent drug addicts," said Bachus.

The \$447,146 federal grant is funded by Congress through the U.S. Department of Justice. Bachus says the drug court will serve up to 120 juveniles over the three-year grant period.

"More than half of all individuals brought into the criminal justice system have substance abuse problems. Many of them are non-violent offenders who repeatedly cycle through the court, corrections and probation systems without a structured effort to help them change their behavior. A drug court is different in that these offenders are required to break their addiction to remain in the program and out of jail," Bachus said.

A drug court is a special court calendar or docket designed to achieve a reduction in recidivism and drug abuse among non-violent drug offenders. The court provides intensive judicial supervision, mandatory drug testing during supervised release or probation, and drug treatment.