

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Olver
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Related Agencies
2358 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Latham
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Related Agencies
2349 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

March 19, 2010

Dear Chairman Olver and Ranking Member Latham:

We respectfully urge you to provide \$2.4 billion for HUD's Homeless Assistance Grants in the FY 2011 Transportation-HUD Appropriations Act. This funding request, \$345 million above the Administration's request, is needed to fully implement the HEARTH Act of 2009, a landmark reauthorization of homeless assistance. The investment will help prevent and end homelessness in the midst of one of America's deepest economic crises.

On any given night, 664,000 people are homeless in America, and alarmingly, approximately 42 percent of them are unsheltered – living on sidewalks, under bridges, in parks, and in cars. The homeless population is comprised of families with children, veterans, people with disabilities, survivors of domestic violence, and unaccompanied youth. Community and faith-based providers in rural, suburban and urban communities use Homeless Assistance Grants to provide a safety net to people experiencing homelessness and to help them return to permanent, stable, affordable housing.

The HEARTH Act was enacted in May of last year. It applies two decades of research, innovation, and experience to improve HUD's homeless assistance programs. It directs more funding to prevent homelessness and re-house people who are living on the streets, in emergency shelters, and in precarious, doubled-up, and overcrowded situations. The HEARTH Act also provides more funding to house homeless families with children and to serve homeless people in rural areas. Funding will need to increase this year to implement these improvements:

- Strengthen efforts to end chronic homelessness. HUD's homeless assistance programs have helped reduce chronic homelessness—long term and repeated homelessness for people with disabilities—from 176,000 people in January, 2005 to 124,000 in January, 2008. The HEARTH Act streamlines and simplifies the creation of permanent supportive housing.
- Enable communities to serve people who are living doubled up with other families, living in motels, or in severely overcrowded or unsafe housing and to invest in prevention.
- Help families with children quickly escape homelessness. Communities will be able to create and expand Rapid Re-Housing initiatives that have dramatically

reduced the length of time families are homeless in communities where they have been implemented.

Prevention and rapid re-housing programs are already proving their value. Last year's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act included funding for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program, which has helped reduce the impact of the recession on homelessness. Yet many communities are serving far more families than they expected, and will run out of Recovery Act funds long before the recession's impact has faded.

Chairman Olver and Ranking Member Latham, we urge the inclusion of \$2.4 billion in the FY 2011 Transportation-HUD Appropriations Act for the HUD Homeless Assistance Grants program. These resources will help communities implement the strategies to prevent and end homelessness supported by the HEARTH Act. Thank you for considering this request, and for your continuing support of this important program.

Sincerely,

Queen G. Moore

Geoff Davis

Lois Capps

Kurt Gillin

Dave Loeback

Rush Holt

Billy Day

Mike Dingler

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