



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

February 16, 2007

Dear Colleague,

I invite you to join me in sending a letter to the Transportation and HUD Appropriations Subcommittee urging them to fund the Homeless Assistance Grants program in the Department of Housing and Urban Development at \$1.8 billion in FY08. This recommended level is \$214 million above the President's budget request for the program and \$358 million over the FY07 level for this program contained in the Joint Funding Resolution.

The Homeless Assistance Grants program provides funding to states, cities, and non-profit organizations for emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent housing and supportive services to ensure that people experiencing homelessness achieve a basic level of safety and can make progress toward self sufficiency.

It is imperative that we fund the Homeless Assistance Grants program at a level that will more appropriately support states and communities in their efforts to combat the growing problem of homelessness in rural, suburban, and urban communities across the nation.

If you would like to sign onto the letter, please contact Hilary Swab (hilary.swab@mail.house.gov) (x54011) or Lauren O'Brien in Congressman Geoff Davis' office (Lauren.obrien@mail.house.gov) by March 6, 2007.

Sincerely,

/s
Julia Carson
Member of Congress

/s
Geoff Davis
Member of Congress

Below is the text of the letter:

The Honorable John Olver
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2358 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Knollenberg
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2349 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

March XX, 2007

Dear Chairman Olver and Ranking Member Knollenberg:

We respectfully urge you to provide \$1.8 billion for the Homeless Assistance Grants Program in the FY 2008 Transportation, HUD and Related Agencies Appropriations measure. This funding request, \$214 million above the President's FY 2008 budget request, is a more appropriate investment level in HUD's homeless assistance program, given the unabated problem of homelessness across the nation; prior years' underinvestment in federal homeless assistance; and the steady annual increase in the costs of maintaining permanent housing projects commenced with Homeless Assistance Grants funds.

Across the nation, approximately 3.5 million Americans will experience homelessness in a given year. The homeless population is comprised of families with children, veterans, individuals with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, unaccompanied youth, and working poor single adults. Without assistance, these individuals and families will fall into illness, lag behind in education and miss out on crucial employment opportunities.

At 40 percent and rising, families with children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population. In 2008, nearly 1 in 50 American children will experience the tragedy of homelessness, placing them at risk for a number of unhealthy outcomes including developmental disabilities, increased rates of illness, numerous academic difficulties, and placement in the foster care system. More than 42 percent of homeless parents are working and still are unable to afford safe, decent housing for their families.

Rural, suburban, and urban communities in every Congressional district rely on the Homeless Assistance Grants program to mitigate the effects of homelessness on children, youth, families, and single adults. HUD homeless assistance funds are distributed to community-based, faith-based, and public service providers, which are working tirelessly to provide a safety net to persons experience homelessness and create pathways back to permanent, stable, affordable housing. HUD homeless assistance funds are used to support innovative approaches to prevent and shorten episodes of homelessness. Further, the funds support communities in the creation of a seamless continuum of care including street outreach to help the homeless access mainstream services and supportive housing, emergency shelters, transitional housing, permanent housing and the services necessary for homeless persons to return to and maintain safe and stable living arrangements.

Chairman Olver and Ranking Member Knollenberg, we urge the inclusion of \$1.8 billion in the FY 2008 Transportation, Housing, and Related Agencies measure for the HUD Homeless Assistance Grants program. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,