

The Honorable Christopher Bond, Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Treasury, the Judiciary and
Housing and Urban Development
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Treasury, the Judiciary and
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U.S. Senate
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The Honorable Joe Knollenberg, Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Treasury, and Housing and
Urban Development, The Judiciary, District of
Columbia
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Olver, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Treasury, and Housing and
Urban Development, The Judiciary, District of
Columbia
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members,

The undersigned organizations—including a broad range of faith-based and community organizations working to end homelessness in America—urge Congress to appropriate \$1.536 billion in FY2007 for the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Homeless Assistance Grants.

As many as 3.5 million people in the United States will experience homelessness this year, nearly half of whom will be in families with children. Homelessness will worsen the mental and physical health of these children and adults, and it will undermine their treatment, education and employment prospects. Homelessness will place additional strain on the schools that struggle to keep homeless children enrolled and learning, and the hospitals and emergency rooms that must care for homeless people whose illnesses would never have occurred if they had permanent housing.

The paths into homelessness are many, ranging from the onset of illness to natural disasters. It is experienced by veterans returning from war, people who have lost their jobs, people with disabilities who languish on the streets, and families who were evicted from their housing.

The path out of homelessness relies on programs funded by HUD’s Homeless Assistance Grants. Supplemented by dedicated staff, volunteers, and resources from the private sector and local and state governments, HUD homeless assistance helps hundreds of thousands of families and individuals move into permanent housing. By providing a healthier, more stable living environment, homelessness programs can reduce public costs to hospitals, emergency rooms, law enforcement and foster care systems.

Funding at the \$1.536 billion level proposed by the Administration and passed by the House of Representatives is the equivalent of \$439 per homeless individual. This is a small amount, and it will help our efforts to further improve our programs, implement strategic plans to end homelessness as encouraged by the federal government, and make our Nation’s response to homelessness an even more efficient data driven system.

Thank you for recognizing the critical importance of HUD's Homeless Assistance Grants. Please work to ensure that \$1.536 billion is included for Homeless Assistance Grants in the final FY 2007 HUD appropriations bill.

Sincerely,