

February 17, 2011

The Honorable Jim Moran
2239 Rayburn Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Moran,

As the President and CEO of Volunteers of America Chesapeake, an organization nearly 115-years strong that provides high-quality human services to more than 9,000 men, women and children in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia, I am writing to ask that you ensure adequate resources are available to serve homeless and at-risk veterans, families, youth and individuals in our district.

In fiscal year 2010 our organization served more than 4,267 individuals through our Homeless Services programs and another 501 individuals through our Supportive Services facilities. In all we served 4,768 men, women and children who were either currently homeless – or at risk of becoming or returning to homelessness.

But we cannot do this important work alone – we need the support of a federal partner. That is why I am urging you to work to ensure that the FY 2011 appropriations bill being considered by the House in the coming days includes:

- \$2.2 billion for HUD's McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants programs
- 10,000 new joint HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) vouchers
- 10,000 joint HUD, HHS, and Education Housing and Services for Homeless Persons Demonstration housing vouchers.

These resources are a critical part of our efforts to prevent and end homelessness in not only your home community, but in the entire Chesapeake region and across the nation. Without this assistance The National Alliance to End Homelessness estimates that approximately 160,000 more people would be homeless under the current FY 2011 proposal than would have been housed under the T-HUD bill passed by the House last July.

Simply put, these programs work. Homelessness fell by 10 percent nationally between 2005 and 2009 and chronic homelessness fell by one-third between 2005 and 2009. Although homelessness has risen slightly in recent years due to the recession, nationally, we have been able to prevent huge spikes in homelessness. This is due in large part to continued implementation of proven, successful strategies for actually ending homelessness and instead providing the tools for self-reliant living – strategies supported by these key federal programs like the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants program.



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I hope we can count on you to work to ensure that the FY 2011 bill being considered in the coming days includes the above FY 2011 funding levels for these critical programs.

If you have any questions about this request, or to learn more about how our organization's mission to inspire self-reliance, dignity and hope through human services is changing lives in your district, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russell Snyder".

Russell K. Snyder, President/CEO
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