

March 18, 2014

Rep. C. A. Dutch Ruppensberger  
Maryland 2<sup>nd</sup> District  
2416 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Rep. Ruppensberger:

On behalf of Volunteers of America Chesapeake, I am writing to urge your continued support at this critical time for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants, the most important single program for our work to address homelessness in Maryland.

We were gratified by the outcome of the recently-enacted Omnibus Appropriations package for McKinney-Vento, but as you know the key decisions lay ahead in the appropriations process. As you review your own appropriations priorities with the HUD Appropriations Subcommittee, it would mean a great deal if you would consider a programmatic request supporting the Administration's proposal for \$2.405 billion in FY2015 for Homeless Assistance grants.

The effort to reduce homelessness is one of the great evolving success stories of our time. Even during the recession, homelessness in Maryland has actually decreased. That is the result of a consensus to solve the problem and the commitment to provide the means to do so, particularly through McKinney-Vento grants.

Nationally, Volunteers of America is one of the nation's largest and most comprehensive health and human services organizations. With 31 programs across Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia, Volunteers of America Chesapeake annually helps nearly 11,000 people in need, including the homeless; individuals with mental illness or intellectual disabilities; and those in need of affordable housing, recovering from substance abuse addiction or involved in community corrections. We particularly seek to assist military veterans grappling with homelessness, substance abuse or mental health challenges. Our track record of productivity and efficiency has made many of our programs national models.

Regrettably, the loss of the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) and the sequestration-related cutbacks in Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) seriously disrupted our work across the Chesapeake region. The Budget Control Act of

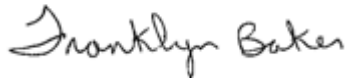
2011 and the sequestration process have placed new burdens on federal housing and homeless assistance programs. The post-sequestration funding level \$1.929 billion undermined efforts to address the soaring need.

In most years, these programs have earned strong bipartisan support, both in the community and in the Congress. That is because these programs have consistently delivered a return on investment, in both human and financial terms, in reducing chronic homelessness. That spirit seemed to be rekindled in the funding levels reflected in the recent federal budget deal – a real morale boost for the effort to address homelessness. We seek your help now to continue that momentum.

If McKinney-Vento is funded at the proposed \$2.405 billion level, we can sustain our work to reduce homelessness in Maryland, including for the large number of homeless veterans statewide. Please consider submitting a letter to that effect to the Appropriations Subcommittee; if helpful, we would be pleased to suggest sample language.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. As always, we would be happy to provide additional background – and hope you will also consider this a standing invitation to visit any of our facilities and programs across Maryland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Franklyn Baker". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Franklyn Baker  
Chief of Staff and External Affairs Officer

Cc: Russell K. Snyder, President/CEO