



September 28, 2015

The Honorable Tim Murphy
U.S. House of Representatives
2332 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Murphy:

The American Jail Association (AJA) and our 4,000 correction and detention officers are pleased to endorse H.R. 2646, *The Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2015*. This bill takes necessary steps to include correction and detention officers in reforming our broken mental health system.

The American Jail Association is the voice of the nations' jails. With over 4,000 members in 3,800 correctional facilities across the county, AJA provides leadership in the development of professional standards, management practices, programs, and services. The American Jail Association is pleased the *Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2015* makes correction and detention officers an active part of the process from consulting with the departments of correction when prioritizing the integration of services, to early diagnosis, intervention, and workforce development. Having the Assistant Secretary coordinate with the justice and correction systems when building evidence-based practices and service delivery models, brings correction and detention officers unique mental health perspective to the table.

The Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act's Interagency Serious Mental Illness Coordinating Committee, appointments "non-Federal public members to be appointed by the Assistant Secretary" and "at least one member shall be a correctional officer." The American Jail Association is pleased a non-Federal correctional officer will be appointed by the Assistant Secretary. In order for the correctional officer to truly be non-Federal, the correctional officer must be a "local" correctional officer.

In closing, AJA thanks Congressman Murphy for his hard work on bringing this issue to the forefront. This is one of the most pressing issues facing the United States and AJA is ready and willing to lend a hand in any way possible. Thank you again for your leadership, AJA looks forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert J. Kasbian".

Robert J. Kasbian
Executive Director