



## The American Round Table To Abolish Homelessness

November 6, 2014

The Honorable Tim Murphy, Ph.D.  
United States House of Representatives  
2332 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Murphy:

The American Round Table to Abolish Homelessness is pleased to endorse the **Helping Families In Mental Health Crisis Act** (H.R. 3717). We applaud your leadership in undertaking a review of the mental health system and your dedication to crafting this legislation to improve the service delivery system and advance the treatment and recovery of our most vulnerable neighbors who are homeless.

The most recent national data on homelessness collected in local communities demonstrates the importance of this legislation for individuals who are homeless and living with serious mental illness. Of the 13 percent of people who experience long-term or chronic homelessness – individuals who have been the focus of the Federal goal to end chronic homelessness since 2002 - more than 80 percent struggle with some combination of mental illness, addiction, and major medical ailments. Access to treatment and the central antidote to homelessness of permanent housing - in the form of the cost-effective and evidence-based innovation of Housing First - are the solution to end homelessness and create a trajectory of recovery.

We support your efforts to expand the provision of evidence-based mental health services necessary for the well-being of individuals with serious mental illness who receive treatment through the community mental health system, an integrated behavioral health and primary care network, or an in-patient setting. We also support the use of Assisted Outpatient Treatment which has been shown to reduce homelessness, end the random ricocheting of individuals through expensive crisis systems, and reduce costs to the taxpayer in the use of acute and emergency services, including law enforcement.

Comprehensive mental health reforms, such as those proposed in your legislation, deserve attention by a broad range of stakeholders. We appreciate your outreach and consideration of our comments. The Round Table is committed to working with you and other mental health leaders in Congress to forward this bill.

Sincerely,

Philip F. Mangano  
President and CEO

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