



November 6, 2015

Dear Representative,

Independent Women's Voice, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization for mainstream women, men and families, is proud to support H.R. 2646, the "Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act," introduced by Congressman Tim Murphy (R-PA). This bipartisan legislation will do much to overhaul and improve the nation's broken mental health system by refocusing programs, reforming grants, and removing federal barriers to care. By ensuring that resources are wisely spent, millions of patients across the country will receive the high-quality care they deserve.

These changes will better serve the American people by curbing taxpayer spending. Right now, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) spends \$3.6 billion each year. In addition, the federal government contributes a total of \$130 billion annually to 112 federal programs and agencies intended to provide effective mental health services for millions of people.

Despite billions of dollars in current spending on mental health, patients still face significant obstacles to treatment. Rural areas are underserved, leaving mentally ill patients without access to mental health services. Thousands of psychiatric patients don't have access to inpatient beds in community hospitals. With less than 8,500 child psychiatrists in the United States, there is a dire nationwide shortage. In fact, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry estimates that four times more doctors are needed to meet demand.

Clearly, this is a woefully ineffective system and reform is overdue. It's time to focus on ways to provide treatment for those who need it most, and in some cases, cannot care for themselves. Rather than throwing large sums of money at the problem, we need to ensure that taxpayer resources are well targeted. This is exactly what the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act strives to do, by safeguarding taxpayer funds and breaking down the barriers to care for millions of Americans who suffer from severe psychiatric disorders. IWV urges members of the Energy & Commerce Committee and the full House of Representatives to advance it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'HR Higgins', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Heather R. Higgins  
President and CEO  
Independent Women's Voice