

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 18, 2005

The Honorable Joe Knollenberg
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury,
Housing, and Urban Development
Committee on Appropriations
H-218, Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John W. Olver
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury,
Housing, and Urban Development
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Knollenberg and Ranking Member Olver:

We are writing to request a funding level of at least \$385 million for the Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) program for Fiscal Year (FY) 2006. As you know, the HOPWA program, which enjoys wide bipartisan support, is the only federal housing program that specifically provides cities and states with the resources to address the housing crisis facing people living with AIDS.

Despite consistent support from your committee in increasing HOPWA's annual appropriation, the growing demand for services requires a substantial increase this year. The National AIDS Housing Coalition estimates that over \$2 billion is required to truly meet the housing needs of all those living with HIV/AIDS. In light of budget realities, however, we ask for \$385 million to help those in the greatest need.

Major strides have been made in treatment options for people living with HIV/AIDS, and with these advances, there is new hope for everyone touched by the AIDS epidemic. However, the cost of these new treatments can often force people to decide between essential medications and other necessities, such as housing. Individuals with HIV/AIDS must have stable housing to ensure access to and/or benefit from complex drug treatments which often require special dietary needs. In addition, medications must often be refrigerated and taken on a rigid time schedule. Inadequate housing is not only a barrier to treatment, but also puts people with HIV/AIDS at risk of premature death from exposure to other diseases, poor nutrition, stress and lack of medical care. At any given time, one-third to one-half of all Americans with AIDS are either homeless or in imminent danger of losing their homes. HOPWA answers this need, successfully providing suitable, reasonably priced housing for thousands of Americans battling AIDS.

HOPWA enables cities and states to design and provide community-based, cost-effective housing for people living with AIDS and their families. It provided maximum flexibility to states and communities to implement strategies that respond to local housing needs and shortfalls. In addition, the administrative costs of the program are capped, ensuring the money goes directly to serving people with AIDS.

In FY 2005 alone, HOPWA funds will support the delivery of services to over 80,000 households in 122 jurisdictions across 39 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. Unfortunately, the demand for housing accommodations for people living with HIV/AIDS continues to greatly outweigh the resources currently available.

The HOPWA program offers thousands of people living with HIV/AIDS and their families the safety and stability necessary to benefit from drug treatments that have contributed to a dramatic reduction in AIDS mortality in this nation. We urge you to give the highest priority to an allocation of \$385 million for HOPWA in the Fiscal Year 2006 VA/HUD Appropriations bill so that this important program may continue to serve those in need.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,


Terrold Nadler

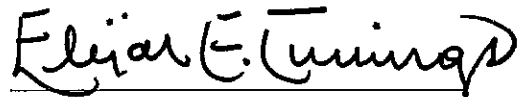

Heana Ros-Lehtinen

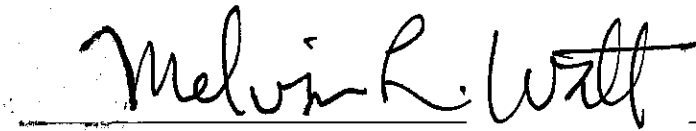

Joseph Crowley

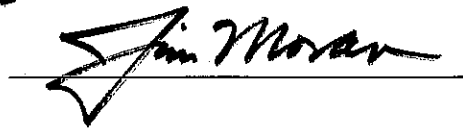

Linda Roybal-Allard


George S. J.


Bill Sand

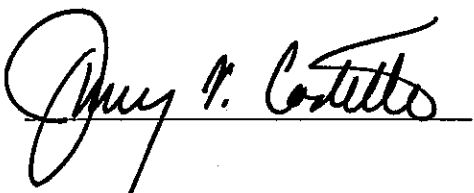

Elicia E. Turinop

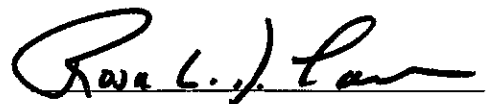

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Signatories of the FY06 HOPWA Letter:

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