

September 16, 2004

The Honorable Jon Kyl  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

Transmitted Via FAX (202) 224-2207

Dear Senator Kyl:

As President of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Diocesan Council in Phoenix, Arizona representing 2,500 Vincentians at 90 church conferences in central and northern Arizona, I am writing to request your support for funding for supportive services in the permanent supportive housing necessary to end homelessness for chronically homeless, disabled people.

There are an estimated 30,000 homeless in Arizona statewide with one-third of this population in the Phoenix area. At St. Vincent de Paul we serve an average of 2,500 homeless monthly with services including showers, clothing, sack lunches, job and shelter referrals. St. Vincent de Paul also operates Ozanam Manor, a shelter for disabled persons on the verge of becoming homeless. St. Vincent de Paul, in collaboration with the City of Phoenix, Maricopa County and Central Arizona Shelter (400 bed facility) is participating in the development of a Human Services Campus downtown to serve our homeless population. However, the success of the campus in alleviating homelessness is ultimately dependent on the development of supportive housing as envisioned by ELHSI and the Samaritan Act.

People who experience chronic homelessness have significant disabilities and are often homeless for years at a time. However, research has found that permanent supportive housing – housing with services – helps them move from the streets and shelters into safe, secure housing, and puts them on the road to recovery.

Please communicate with Representative David Obey (D-WI), Ranking Member of the Labor-Health and Human Services (HHS)-Education Appropriation Subcommittee requesting \$45 million in the FY 05 HHS appropriation for the End Long-Term Homelessness Services Initiative (ELHSI). Rep. Richard Burr (R-NC), member of the Health Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee, will shortly introduce legislation to create ELHSI. In the event that ELHSI authorizing legislation does not pass Congress this year, I ask that you support \$45 million for ELHSI as part of the HHS/SAMHSA's Projects of Regional and National Significance.

On behalf of the council I request your support for the renewal of funds supporting existing permanent supportive housing for homeless people with disabilities. Please communicate a request to Representative Alan Mollohan (D-WVA), Ranking Member of the VA-HUD-IA Appropriations Subcommittee, for an increase of \$150 million in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Program for Supportive Housing Program-Permanent Housing renewals. Congress and the President have already approved renewal of similar HUD Shelter Plus Care (SPC) funding renewals for other permanent supportive housing.

Our council supports funding for the Administration's FY 2005 \$70 million multi-agency budget proposal for the Samaritan Initiative. The initiative would create funding streams in 3 key departments - \$50 million in HUD, \$10 million in VA, and \$10 million in HHS – and then combine these funds to provide permanent housing and supportive services.

Arizona is facing substantial budget shortfalls. We cannot make progress serving chronically homeless people without more resources to provide crucial services like mental health and substance abuse treatment. Congress and the Administration have set a goal of ending chronic homelessness in 10 years. Please help us by supporting this important endeavor. Ending chronic homelessness will improve the lives of thousands of people in Arizona.

Sincerely,

Stephen J. Jenkins  
President, Diocesan Council  
Society of St. Vincent de Paul