

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 6, 2015

The Honorable Mark Kirk  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Military Construction,  
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jon Tester  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Military Construction,  
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kirk and Ranking Member Tester:

As the Senate Appropriations Committee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies considers the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Appropriations bill, we respectfully request the Subcommittee to continue to provide robust funding for the FY 2016 and advanced FY 2017 appropriations for the Supporting Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program, as well as the Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program.

In August 2014, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the Interagency Council on Homelessness announced that the annual Point-in-Time Count showed there were 49,933 homeless veterans across the country on a given night. Although this is a decline of thirty-three percent since 2010, we must do more if we are to end veteran homelessness in our country once and for all.

The SSVF and GPD programs are central to federal efforts to end veteran homelessness. These two unique programs support community-based organizations to provide critical services and transitional housing for veterans and their families.

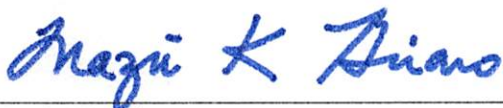
Through the SSVF program, VA awards grants to non-profit organizations to assist low-income veterans and their families living in or transitioning to permanent housing. Grantees offer eligible veteran families with case management, and assistance in obtaining VA and other benefits, including: health care services, daily living services, personal financial planning services, legal services, housing counseling services, among others. Since the program's creation in 2011, VA has awarded a total of \$1.059 billion to grantees in all 50 states, and according to VA, eighty-six percent of households that completed SSVF programs successfully exited to permanent housing.

The VA's GPD Program provides grants to public entities or nonprofit organizations that offer services and transitional housing to homeless veterans. The program includes two primary sources of funding: capital and per diem grants. Capital grants are awarded to entities that remodel, acquire, construct, or expand facilities that serve as veteran service centers or transitional housing. The per diem portion pays organizations for the housing and services provided to veterans at a fixed dollar rate. With nearly 15,000 beds nationwide serving almost 30,000 veterans each year, the GPD Program remains a key component in the fight to end veteran homelessness.

The need for these programs remains great. As VA continues to work towards the goal of ending veteran homelessness by the end of 2015, we support the critical role the SSVF and GPD programs play in serving veterans and their families in need.

We understand the difficult decisions the Subcommittee faces. However, we remain concerned about the ongoing and very serious issue of veteran homelessness. Therefore, we respectfully urge the Subcommittee to provide robust funding for the SSVF and GPD programs that will allow for continued momentum and progress toward ending veteran homelessness. Thank you for your consideration of this request and your support of our nation's veterans and their families.

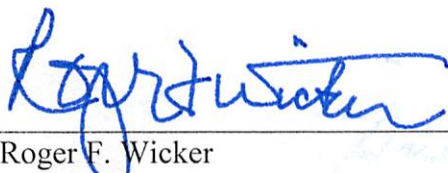
Sincerely,



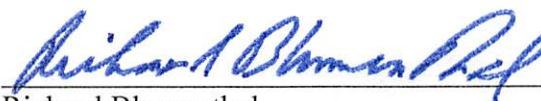
Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



Mike Crapo  
United States Senator



Roger F. Wicker  
United States Senator



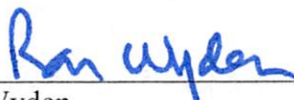
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

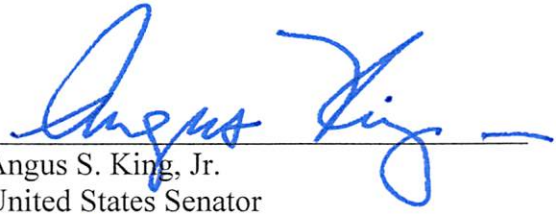


Dean Heller  
United States Senator



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Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



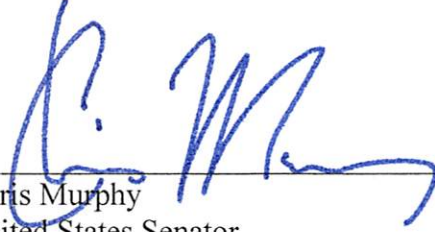
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Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



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Jack Reed  
United States Senator



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Chris Murphy  
United States Senator



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Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



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Al Franken  
United States Senator



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Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator