

October 7, 2009

The Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin
U.S. Senate
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Cardin:

The undersigned organizations endorse the “Hate Crimes Against the Homeless Statistics Act,” your legislation to extend hate crimes data collection – through the Federal Bureau of Investigation tracking system already in place – to include homeless victims.

Between 1999 and 2007, there have been 218 documented fatal attacks against homeless persons (despite the absence of uniform law enforcement reporting). This far exceeds the number of fatal hate crimes reported in all legally-recognized hate crime categories combined. While some of the attacks were simply a result of homeless persons’ vulnerable position, many were perpetrated due to bias against homeless people. They range from beatings with golf clubs to setting a man on fire while sleeping.

Victims of homeless hate crimes include men, women, children, youth, and veterans. In 2006 alone, the number of attacks against homeless people rose by 65 percent compared to that of 2005. We are alarmed by this accelerating trend.

It is beyond time that we improve our understanding of violent crimes against our fellow Americans due to their homeless status. Rigorous and uniform tracking and reporting of such crimes is the first step in determining future actions to prevent criminal activity.

Hate-motivated crimes against homeless persons instill fear among our homeless neighbors and serve to continue to marginalize them from society. We must learn more about where and when violent crimes against people experiencing homelessness take place, without delay, before harm against them escalates further.

Senator Cardin, we gratefully acknowledge your leadership for introducing the Hate Crimes Against the Homeless Statistics Act. We call on Congress to assure prompt passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

National Coalition for the Homeless
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
AFL-CIO
Americans for Democratic Action
American Psychological Association
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Buddhist Peace Fellowship
Catholic Charities USA

Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Coalition on Human Needs
Give Us Your Poor
Helen Keller National Center
Hip Hop Caucus
International Union of Police Associations
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Center on Family Homelessness
National Coalition on Deaf-Blindness
National Congress of Black Women
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund
National Immigrant Solidarity Network
National Network for Youth
National Organization for Victim Assistance
National Policy and Advocacy Coalition on Homelessness
National Youth Advocacy Coalition
National PTA
Presbyterian Church USA, Washington Office
RESULTS
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
United States Veterans Initiative
Universal Living Wage Campaign
Women of Reform Judaism
The Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring
YWCA USA

Alabama:

Federation of Southern Cooperatives
YWCA Central Alabama

Alaska:

Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center

Arizona:

Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness
Ecumenical Chaplaincy for the Homeless
The Giving Tree Outreach Program

National Lawyers Guild - Central Arizona Chapter
Primavera Foundation, Inc.
Tucson Planning Council for the Homeless (TPCH)

Arkansas:

Arkansas Homeless Coalition
Arkansas Supportive Housing Network
The King's Outreach

California:

Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County
Dolores Street Community Services
Friends of Prado Day Center
Interfaith Shelter Network
Los Angeles Coalition to End Hunger & Homelessness
Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center
Los Angeles Mission
Quinn Cottages
St. Mary's Center
Transition House

Colorado:

Greeley Transitional House
Habitat for Humanity of Estes Valley
Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Denver

Connecticut:

Beth-El Center Inc.
Collaborative Center for Justice, Inc.
St. Luke's LifeWorks

District of Columbia:

Charlie's Place at St. Margaret's Episcopal Church
One In Ten
SOME, Inc. (So Others Might Eat)

Florida:

Americans Ending Homelessness, Inc.
Center for Independent Living of South Florida, Inc.
Charlotte County Homeless Coalition, Inc.
Coalition for Independent Living Options, Inc.
Fanm Ayisyen Nan Miyami/ Haitian Women of Miami, Inc.
Florida Consumer Action Network
Florida Keys Outreach Coalition

Haven Drop In Center, Inc.
Life In The Son Ministries
Miami Coalition for the Homeless, Inc.
Monroe Association of Remarkable Citizens
Pax Christi Northeast Florida
RESULTS Florida
Southernmost Homeless Assistance League

Georgia:
Fulton Atlanta Community Action Authority
Georgia Coalition to End Homelessness
Georgia Rural Urban Summit
Living Room, Inc.
Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless

Hawaii:
Affordable Housing and Homeless Alliance (AHHA)

Illinois:
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights
Hesed House, Inc.
PATH, Inc.
Public Action to Deliver Shelter
Project IRENE

Indiana:
Haven House Services, Inc.

Iowa:
Bio Logistics LLC

Kansas:
Inter-Faith Ministries

Kentucky:
Interfaith Hospitality Network of Northern Kentucky

Louisiana:
UNITY of Greater New Orleans

Maine:
Hope Haven Gospel Mission
Anne H. Jordan, Commissioner Maine Department of Public Safety

Maryland:

Advocacy and Training Center
Homeless Persons Representation Project, Inc.
Immanuel United Church of Christ
Public Justice Center
Students Sharing Coalition, Inc.
United Evangelical Church, UCC
United Ministries, Inc. / Earl's Place

Massachusetts:

Independent Living Center of the North Shore & Cape Ann, Inc.
Somerville Homeless Coalition, Inc.

Michigan:

Affirmations
Gateway Community Services

Minnesota:

Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs
Elim Transitional Housing, Inc.
Fargo Moorhead Coalition for Homeless Persons, Inc.
Hunger Solutions Minnesota
Integrated Community Solutions, Inc.
Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing
Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless
Residents for Affordable Housing
Simpson Housing Services, Inc.

Missouri:

Springfield Victory Mission

Montana:

Family Promise of Gallatin Valley
The Joseph Residence at Maclay Commons
Poverello Center, Inc.

Nebraska:

SASA Crisis Center

New Hampshire:

New Hampshire Council of Churches
New Hampshire Homeless
New Horizons for New Hampshire, Inc.

New Jersey:

Atlantic City Rescue Mission
DIAL Inc.- Center for Independent Living

NEXT STEP: People with Disabilities for Social and Economic Justice
Pride Connections Center of New Jersey

New Mexico:
New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness

New York:
Association for Community Living
Compass House
Saint Peter Damian Fraternity
Transitional Living Services of Onondaga County, Inc.
YWCA of Binghamton & Broome County

North Carolina:
Action for Children North Carolina
Bethesda Center for the Homeless
Charlotte Emergency Housing
Good Work Inc.
Samaritan Ministries
Wilmington Interfaith Hospitality Network

North Dakota:
Minot Area Homeless Coalition
North Dakota Coalition for Homeless People

Ohio:
Cleveland Tenants Organization
Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio
Columbus Coalition for the Homeless
Domestic Violence Center
GLBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland
Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless
Neighborhood House Association of Lorain County

Oklahoma:
Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless, Inc.

Oregon:
Family Bridge
Northwest Parish Nurse Ministries
Oregon Law Center
Union Gospel Mission of Portland

Pennsylvania:

Dignity Housing

Epiphany of Our Lord Parish

Just for Jesus Challenge Homeless Outreach

Pennsylvania Council of Churches

Project H.O.M.E.

Typed Wood Street Commons

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom - Pittsburgh

Puerto Rico:

Manos al Servicio de la Comunidad

Rhode Island:

Colonel Brendan P. Doherty, *Superintendent, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety*

South Carolina:

Crisis Ministries of South Carolina

Tennessee:

Interfaith Homeless Network

Nashville Homeless Power Project

Texas:

House the Homeless, Inc.

National Organization for Women, North Dallas Chapter

Utah:

Crossroads Urban Center

Salt Lake Community Action Program

Virginia:

Arlington Street People's Assistance Network

Doorways for Women and Families

United Way of Roanoke Valley

Valley Mission, Inc.

Washington:

Building Changes

Council for the Homeless of Clark County WA

Women's Housing, Equality and Enhancement League

YWCA Clark County

Wisconsin:

Hands of Faith of Beloit

Madison-Area Urban Ministry

Wyoming:
Wyoming Coalition for the Homeless