

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 24, 2023

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Chair  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education, and  
Related Agencies  
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education, and  
Related Agencies  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Chair Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

Thank you for your leadership and work to secure funding for mental health crisis response teams in Fiscal Year 2023. As you work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we write to request an increase to \$100 million in funding to invest in mental health crisis response teams, in line with the President's budget request.

In the explanatory statement for the FY 2023 Appropriations Omnibus, Congress included language supporting \$20 million for emergency response teams that divert mental health crisis calls from law enforcement to behavioral health teams. Encouraging the use of behavioral health professionals to respond to mental health crisis situations improves the quality of mental health crisis response and strengthens public safety by providing long term solutions to mental health and substance use issues. That is why we strongly encourage higher funding levels.

The overwhelming majority of 911 calls involve mental health and substance use incidents, neighbor disputes, nuisance complaints, and requests for wellness checks where trained, unarmed behavioral health professionals could effectively respond. Both the police and policing reform advocates often assert that specialized service providers—such as social workers, paramedics, and peer support counselors—are better equipped to handle such situations than armed officers.

For some local governments, however, establishing and growing mental health crisis response teams is cost prohibitive given the resources it takes to cover training, personnel, and equipment. Additional federal funding could go a long way in offsetting costs and spurring growth of these programs across the country. Mental health crisis response teams are important components of building up comprehensive crisis care infrastructure as outlined by SAMHSA's National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care, which emphasizes a no-wrong-door integrated crisis system that directs people to care wherever they are introduced to the system.

It is critical that we make investments in public safety programs that center mental health care and work to resolve the underlying conditions of so many emergency calls—homelessness, substance use, and other chronic health issues. Existing 911 response limited to police, fire, or EMT services have been overwhelmed and simply do not meet the needs of the communities they serve. A focus on a holistic public safety approach centered on the needs of communities is long overdue.

We urge you to include the following report language for mental health crisis response teams in the FY 2024 appropriations bill—

*Mental Health Crisis Response Grants* – The Committee included \$20,000,000 in funding crisis care services that can divert people experiencing a mental health crisis from the criminal justice system into mental health treatment in fiscal year 2023. However, the availability of mental health crisis care remains inconsistent across the United States, and first responders are not always trained and equipped to diffuse a mental health crisis, which can lead to tragic outcomes. Many communities are implementing model programs where mental health providers respond to mental health emergencies, sometimes in partnership with law enforcement. To make these model programs more widely available, the Committee includes \$100,000,000 for a pilot program for communities to create, or enhance existing, mobile crisis response teams that divert the response for mental health crises from law enforcement to behavioral health teams. These teams may be composed of licensed counselors, clinical social workers, physicians, EMTs, crisis workers, and/or peers available to respond to people in crisis and provide immediate stabilization and referral to community-based mental health services and supports.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



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Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



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Cori Bush  
Member of Congress



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Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress



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Katie Porter  
Member of Congress



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Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.  
Member of Congress



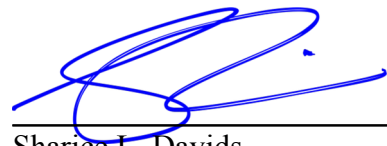
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Paul Tonko  
Member of Congress



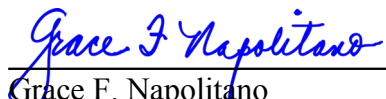
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Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress



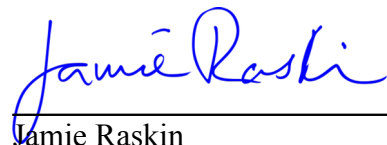
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Sharice L. Davids  
Member of Congress



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Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress



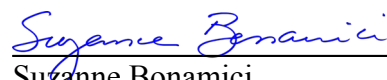
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Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress



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Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress



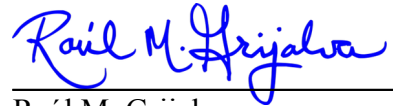
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Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



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Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



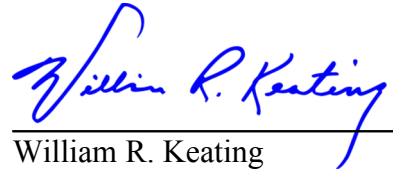
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Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



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Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



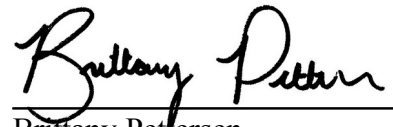
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William R. Keating  
Member of Congress



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Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



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Brittany Pettersen  
Member of Congress



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Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress



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Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress



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Bill Foster  
Member of Congress



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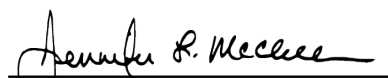
Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress



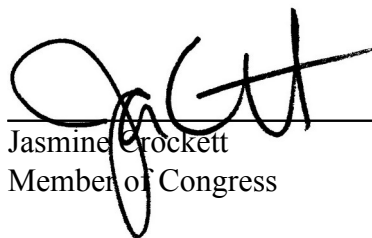
Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress



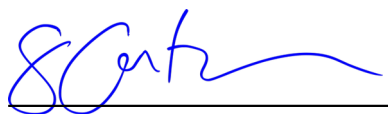
Richard E. Neal  
Member of Congress,  
Committee on Ways and  
Means



Jennifer L. McClellan  
Member of Congress



Jasmine Crockett  
Member of Congress



Sean Casten  
Member of Congress



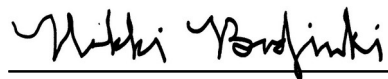
Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress



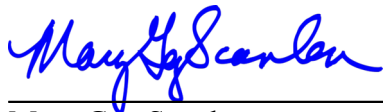
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



Nikki Budzinski  
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



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Mary Gay Scanlon  
Member of Congress



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Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress



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Dwight Evans  
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Sydney Kamlager-Dove  
Member of Congress



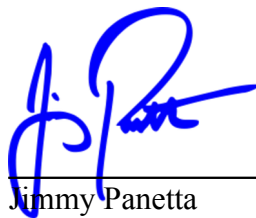
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Elissa Slotkin  
Member of Congress



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Lizzie Fletcher  
Member of Congress



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Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



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Emilia Strong Sykes  
Member of Congress



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Donald G. Davis  
Member of Congress



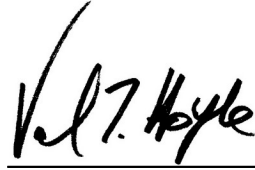
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Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress



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Chris Deluzio  
Member of Congress



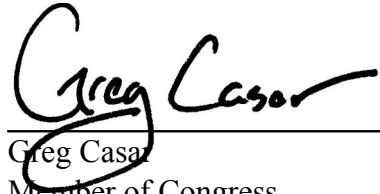
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Val Hoyle  
Member of Congress



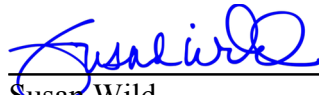
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Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress



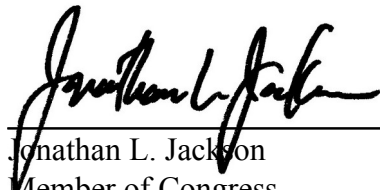
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Greg Casar  
Member of Congress



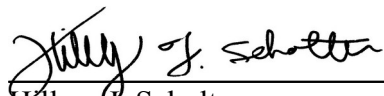
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Susan Wild  
Member of Congress



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Jonathan L. Jackson  
Member of Congress



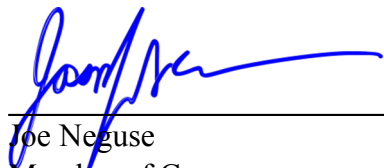
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Hillary J. Scholten  
Member of Congress



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Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress



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Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress



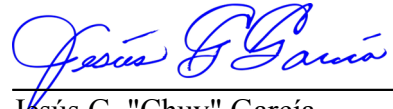
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Troy Carter  
Member of Congress



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Eric Sorensen  
Member of Congress



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Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress