



NATIONAL COALITION for HOMELESS VETERANS

333 ½ Pennsylvania Avenue, SE

Washington, DC 20003-1148

202-546-1969 / 800-VET-HELP

Website: www.nchv.org Email: info@nchv.org

June 25, 2012

The Honorable Dean Heller
361-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Heller,

The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV) would like to formally indicate its support for S. 3308, a bill to improve the furnishing of benefits for homeless veterans who are women or single veterans with dependent children. The bill would directly impact two grant programs administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA): the Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program, and the Grant Program for Homeless Veterans with Special Needs, which is available to GPD Program grantees.

The GPD Program has been the foundation of community-based homeless veteran assistance since 1992. With more than 14,000 beds nationwide, the GPD Program is most often the first and most significant step toward recovery for about 30,000 veterans experiencing homelessness each year. By helping homeless veterans attain adequate income support, independent housing and self-sufficiency, the program is largely accountable for the more than 60 percent reduction in veteran homelessness since 2004.

At present, however, the Grant and Per Diem Program lacks the authority to directly serve veterans' dependent children. As a result, veteran families are either forced to split up or be denied entry into the program. S. 3308 would amend the GPD Program's regulations to allow veterans' dependent children to directly receive services through the program.

S. 3308 would also address a deficiency in the Special Needs Grant Program, which is currently authorized at \$5 million. This funding level is not sufficient to adequately serve the program's target populations— particularly veterans with dependent children.

NCHV endorses S. 3308's proposal to raise the Special Needs Grant Program's authorization to at least 15 percent of the total authorization for the Grant and Per Diem Program. This would help to ensure that the necessary capital funding is available to provide safe, private and secure facilities for homeless women veterans and single homeless veterans with dependent children.

Thank you for your commitment to serving America's veterans in crisis. We are proud to serve as your ally in our nation's effort to end veteran homelessness by 2015.

Sincerely,

Matt Gornick
Policy Assistant Director

Mission: The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans will end homelessness among veterans by shaping public policy, promoting collaboration, and building the capacity of service providers.