

To strengthen
and promote
cities as centers
of opportunity,
leadership, and
governance.



**National League
of Cities**

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May 25, 2004

The Honorable Rick Renzi
United States House of Representatives
418 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Renzi:

On behalf of the 18,000 cities and towns represented by the National League of Cities (NLC), I am writing to express my strong support for your legislation, the *Samaritan Initiative Act of 2004* (H.R. 4057).

As you know, researchers estimate that 150,000 to 200,000 people in the United States are chronically homeless. Unfortunately, many of these people may be living with a disability, addiction or mental illness.

All too often, however, our current system of caring for the homeless leaves local governments to address the problem alone. In a time when local governments are straining to provide increased services to all their citizens, the federal government must step in to provide comprehensive assistance to end chronic homelessness. Such assistance should include increased funding and technical assistance for affordable housing. It must also provide funding for emergency shelters, transitional housing and supportive services.

NLC recently adopted a resolution (see enclosure) supporting the Administration's efforts to end chronic homelessness within ten years. The resolution also supports the Administration's goal of developing one hundred local ten-year plans by the end of 2004. At last count, ninety-two local governments from around the nation have committed to creating their own ten-year plan.

NLC believes that H.R. 4057 is a step in the right direction toward helping these visionary communities succeed in their difficult task. For example, your legislation authorizes Federal agencies to pool their resources, better enabling them to provide funding for permanent affordable housing and supportive services. Additionally, your legislation will allow the agencies to take geographic distribution of the chronically homeless into consideration, a step that will make both urban and rural communities eligible for grants. Finally, your bill authorizes \$70 million in new funding. This will provide federal seed money to help communities to effectively implement, and ultimately succeed in, their ten-year plans to end chronic homelessness.

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NLC offers our support for H.R. 4057 and we look forward to working with you in the coming months to ensure passage of this important legislation.

If you should have any questions or need any further assistance, please contact Jon P. Heroux at 202-626-3025 or heroux@nlc.org.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles Lyons".

Charles Lyons
President
Selectman, Arlington, Massachusetts

Enclosure