



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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10 May 2013

The Honorable Doris O. Matsui
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Leonard J. Lance
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Matsui and Lance,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our support for H.R. 1263, the "Excellence in Mental Health Act."

Recent tragedies have highlighted just how profound an impact the existing weaknesses in our nation's mental health system can have on public safety. These individuals are not criminals and statistics show that they are far more likely to be a victim of crime rather than a perpetrator. However, if they lack access to care or neglect their treatments, they can pose a danger to themselves, to others and to officers responding to the scene. When officers respond to a call for service involving an individual experiencing a mental health issue or event, too often these officers lack the proper training to identify and the handle such individuals. Your legislation would offer law enforcement agencies better resources to respond to such calls.

The legislation would establish Federally Qualified Community Behavioral Health Centers and would include a requirement for 24 hour mobile crisis intervention teams to provide communities with better resources to help and respond to incidents involving the mentally ill. The bill would also authorize prospective Medicaid payments and improve the safety of these individuals, the public at large and law enforcement officers.

On behalf of the more than 330,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, thank you both for your leadership on this important issue. If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in my Washington office.

Sincerely,


Chuck Canterbury
National President