



NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

AARON D. KENNARD
Executive Director

December 12, 2013

The Honorable Tim Murphy
U.S. House of Representatives
2232 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Murphy:

I write on behalf of the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA), and the more than 3,000 elected sheriffs nationwide, in support of a bill you plan to introduce, the *Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2013*. This bill would take important steps to ensure that law enforcement officers have the resources they need to properly respond to individuals with mental illness.

First, the bill would reauthorize the *Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act*, which includes funding for law enforcement training on how to identify and appropriately respond to individuals who have mental illness. Second, the bill would expand the purpose areas in grants under the Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services to include specialized training programs to enhance the ability of law enforcement agencies to address the mental health, behavioral, and substance abuse problems of individuals that officers may encounter, as well as specialized training to enhance the ability of correctional officers to address the mental health needs of individuals in their facilities. These trainings are invaluable tools that ensure that law enforcement is better equipped to appropriately handle situations involving individuals with mental illness.

In closing, I thank you for your efforts to expand the resources available to law enforcement in responding to individuals with mental illness. The National Sheriffs' Association stands ready to assist you, and looks forward to working with you on this and many other issues in the future.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Aaron D. Kennard".

Sheriff (ret.) Aaron D. Kennard
Executive Director