

February 28, 2011

U.S. Senator Jack Reed
United States Senate
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reed:

I am writing today for two specific purposes. First and foremost, I wish to express my appreciation as one of your constituents and as a person who values integrity, honesty and service above self. You have represented Rhode Island and our nation extraordinarily well.

However, I am also writing to express my concern over President Obama's plan to reduce Social Service Block Grants and Community Development Block Grants by half in the next federal budget cycle. As the executive director of a small, Cranston-based, nonprofit human service organization providing essential care services for cognitively impaired individuals from Nineteen Rhode Island communities, I assure you that the loss of these funds will hurt many of Rhode Island's most fragile and needy persons. We are concerned not only for the families served by our programs, but also for those who receive their health and dental services, crisis intervention services, scholarships, job training, food, legal assistance and a host of other important resources supported by CDBG funding in our community. The organizations offering these services to predominately low income individuals cannot depend on fee revenues and fundraising to support the full cost of the services they provide, so Block Grant funding helps to bridge the cavernous gaps between costs and earned revenues.

Although Hope Alzheimer's Center does not directly benefit from Social Services Block grant funding, it has been a proud recipient of CDBG funding for many years. Two years of Cranston CDBG funding supported the Center's construction in 1994. Ten years later, CDBG funds were invested to expand the facility so that we might serve a growing population of community dwelling persons with profound memory loss and multiple comorbidities. While the community retains ownership of the facility, CDBG funds have helped us purchase commercial kitchen equipment and a basic telephone system and to defray the compensation cost of the clinical and direct care personnel who provide comprehensive daytime nursing, nutritional, personal care and therapeutic services. Like other funding recipients, we would be hard-pressed to replace Block Grant funding with other revenues. It is more likely that our organization and our sister human services providers will have to scale back both staffing and services for people who desperately need our

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assistance. In the long run, they will most likely find help in more expensive venues such as nursing homes, hospitals, or institutional settings, at a higher public cost. The lower cost of supporting home and community based services with modest block grant awards preserves scarce public resources and honors the preference of most people to remain in their homes, families and community.

We urge you to consider the full social and financial impact of cutting Social Service and Community Development Block Grant funding when you deliberate the funding cuts proposed in the FY 2012 budget.

Respectfully yours,

Cynthia Conant-Arp, MM
Executive Director

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