



## DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AREA BOARD 10

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*Protecting and Advocating for Persons with  
Developmental Disabilities in Los Angeles County*

March 24, 2014

The Honorable Tim Murphy  
Room 2332 RHOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515-2104

**RE: H.R.3717  
Position: Support**

Dear Congressman Murphy:

Developmental Disabilities Area Board 10 is a state agency mandated to protect and assert the legal, civil, and service rights of people with developmental disabilities in Los Angeles County. California has a system of 13 Area Boards, covering all regions of the state. It is on behalf of our Board of Directors and the 70,000 people with a developmental disability, many of whom also struggle with mental illness who reside in Los Angeles County that I write today to convey our support for H.R 3717.

H.R. 3717 would begin to address the overwhelming needs of people with mental illness. It would put into place a robust system of research, policy, structures and training that would strengthen the safety net for people with mental illness on many fronts. The provisions that are especially noteworthy include the following:

- Increasing monies for research into evidence-based practices will establish a solid floor for good policy.
- Recognizing mental health professionals as health care providers and including coverage for drugs prescribed for mental health needs would permit people to access crucial mental health services and the medications they need to function.
- Law enforcement personnel would receive training in identifying and responding to people with mental illness thus reducing the risk to all involved.
- Children would have better protection in school due to the requirement for education on mental illness for school children aimed at reducing stigma and isolation.

This bill would go a long way to address the long-standing and seemingly intransigent challenge of assisting people with mental illness to access the support they need to live successful and happy lives.

We thank you for your consideration of our input. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Jonine Biesman, Chair  
Governmental Affairs Committee