

TEXAS HOMELESS NETWORK,
Austin, TX, August 18, 1999.

Hon. JUDY BIGGERT,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE BIGGERT: I am writing to support your efforts to strengthen the McKinney Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act by amending it to include provisions from the Illinois State Education for Homeless Children Act.

Texas has significantly strengthened its state laws regarding the enrollment of children in homeless situations, but we believe there is still room for improvement. In particular, the Illinois provisions relating to the immediate enrollment of homeless children and youth, clarification of responsibilities for transportation, and the application of the Act to cover the entire duration homelessness, would be of great benefit to homeless children in our state. These issues still challenge a number of our public schools as they try to meet the educational needs of homeless children and youth. A stronger federal law based on the Illinois law would assist the efforts of schools, service providers, and families in Texas to ensure homeless children and youth's access to and success in school.

The Texas Homeless Network is actively involved in helping local homeless service providers across the state form active, effective coalitions that meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness. In my work with both established and forming coalitions, I have seen and heard reports that homelessness is on the rise for families and unaccompanied youth, in spite of Texas' robust economy. A recent estimate by the Texas Office for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth puts the number of school age children in homeless situations at over 125,000 per year. A little over \$2 million in McKinney funds is available to assist these children, but it is simply not enough.

I thank you for your leadership on this critical issue and applaud your efforts to assist children and families in the most dire circumstances. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or need more information.

Sincerely,

KATHY REID,
Executive Director.

COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS
AND HOUSING IN OHIO,
Columbus, OH, August 19, 1999.

Hon. JUDY BIGGERT,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE BIGGERT: I would like to take this opportunity to voice support for your efforts to strengthen the McKinney Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Act, by amending it to include provisions based upon the Illinois State Education for Homeless Children Act. Homeless children's access to education has significantly improved as a result of the McKinney EHCY program, however, many obstacles persist. Obstacles to the enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children in school still exist, nearly twelve years after the EHCY Act was established.

The provisions of the Illinois law relating to the immediate enrollment of homeless children and youth, clarification of responsibilities for transportation, and the application of the Act to cover the entire duration of homelessness, would be of great benefit to homeless children in the State of Ohio.

The aforementioned issues continue to challenge our public schools, as they try to

meet the educational needs of homeless children and youth. A stronger EHCY Act built around the Illinois law, would go a long way toward assisting the efforts of schools, service providers, and families in Ohio to ensure that homeless children and youth have access to a quality education.

In Ohio, as in most other states, children are by most accounts the fastest growing segment of the homeless population. The State Department of Education estimates that in 1998, some 27,000 children in the twelve McKinney funded districts experienced homelessness. The numbers for the non-McKinney funded school districts are just as staggering. It is estimated that as many as 90,000 school-aged children in these districts experienced homelessness in 1998. In the coming years, these figures are likely to increase if proactive steps are not taken now. This is why your efforts to strengthen the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act are of the utmost importance. "School is one of the few stable, secure places in the lives of homeless children and youth; a place where they can acquire the skills needed to help them escape poverty."

Again, thank you for your leadership on this critical issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or require additional information.

Respectfully,

RICK TAYLOR,
Supportive Housing Director.

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HURRICANE FLOYD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ADERHOLT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCINTYRE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, eastern and southeastern North Carolina have been decimated by the recent hurricanes which have come through our area. Thousands of homes are under water as we speak right now, or have been destroyed. Roads are closed. The State's agriculture industry has been severely hit, and our beautiful beaches have been eroded.

Congress' help is greatly needed in order for the citizens of our State to begin rebuilding their lives once more. I urge my colleagues not to delay in working with us from the North Carolina delegation and our colleagues up and down the East Coast to pass a relief package.

Let me give the Members a sense of what has happened alone in my district, the Seventh Congressional District of North Carolina, the southeastern part of our State where this terrible storm came ashore, Hurricane Floyd, last week when we adjourned to go and work with our citizens in this part of our country.

Brunswick County has estimated damage amounts of more than \$100 million for the 200 homes along the ocean. Local landfills have been closed. Piers have been destroyed.

In Columbus County, 2,300 homes have water and septic problems. There has been extensive damage to sweet potato and corn crops.

In Duplin County, millions of hogs, turkeys, and chickens have been lost, creating severe environmental concerns. The southern area of this county has had several incidents of stranded persons requiring helicopter and boat assistance. Rescue workers have been working around the clock, and are experiencing danger to themselves. There have been reports of persons in the flood area with guns threatening others. Two thousand acres of the tobacco crops for our farmers have also been lost while still in the field.

People's homes have become islands in all three of these counties, Brunswick, Columbus, and Duplin, that I have just described.

In New Hanover County, Wilmington, North Carolina, near where the storm came ashore at Cape Fear near Bald Head Island, contamination of surface water has occurred from the heavy rainfall. The county in that area recommends no swimming or other bodily contact with all coastal and inland water areas until further notice. Residents in many areas have to boil or drink bottled water. There have been contaminated wells.

People have been stranded in rural areas. Even Interstate 40, one of our premier new superhighways in eastern North Carolina, has been closed because of heavy flooding. Eighty feet of beach have been lost in areas such as Bald Head Island near Cape Fear.

In Robeson County, my home county, and in my hometown, Lumberton, North Carolina, damage estimates have been at \$20 million.

Bladen and Pender Counties have suffered almost immeasurable damage with regard to people's homes, businesses, farms, and livestock. The Black River has caused extensive flooding from this terrible storm.

Sampson and Cumberland Counties have also suffered from this vicious storm, especially with regard to agriculture.

Other needs throughout this area include more than 400 roads that have been impassable due to flooding, nearly 600 sections of highway washed out, ten bridges and drainage systems destroyed, many more under water and not yet accessible, and 600 pipelines damaged.

Water and sewage systems have bacteria, nitrates, and other pollutants that have contaminated them and many wells in the area. We are facing agricultural losses of more than \$577 million in crops and \$230 million in rural development needs. Forestry, 40,000 acres of trees have been blown down or destroyed, and 400,000 acres of our forest area is flooded. More than 30,000 homes have been flooded. Nearly 6,500 people are still in shelters.

The problems for health include raw sewage and animal waste. We have found dead animals on dry land attracting diseases and attracting flies,

spreading disease. Our rivers and estuaries are facing raw and untreated sewage.

Our beaches, of course, have obviously faced significant erosion, thus adding and complicating the problem of future damage, as this area alone in the last 3 years has unfortunately seen five hurricanes.

This is a disaster of truly gargantuan proportions. The quick response by State and Federal emergency agencies has been tremendous. Once we know the full extent of the damage which we are even now assessing, it will be imperative that our fellow colleagues join us here in the U.S. Congress together to pass an emergency relief bill to address the devastation to our fellow American citizens, and especially those who have suffered such dire consequences in North Carolina.

We need help. I reach out to my colleagues from across the Nation. I rushed out of here last Wednesday as the hurricane was getting ready to strike. As I went home and saw again the devastation that our area and our homeland has faced in North Carolina, we are asking for help.

We are grateful for those who have responded personally with time and treasure and talent, for the help that we have seen come across the country, from electrical power workers to rescue workers to those in military positions to those who have given of their own food, and sent water to people who do not even have clean water to drink, much less to bathe in. This is a disaster that has affected everyone.

We ask for help, we ask for common sense, and we ask for encouragement to help those who have suffered so much.

THE MINING INDUSTRY IS SUFFERING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFFER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, America's mining industry is suffering. The obvious culprits are predictable in a market economy. They include rising costs, declining profits, and increasing competition. However, there is one more obstruction that is not predictable, surmountable, or logical. That is, the United States Department of the Interior.

Even though mining is a basic national economic activity supplying strategic metal and minerals essential to agriculture, construction, and manufacturing, it may be dealt a fatal blow by the agenda of a hostile Washington bureaucracy. Instead of moving to bolster the mining industry, the Department of the Interior is hastening mining's demise.

Several recent opinions by the Department of the Interior's Solicitor herald a new era of bureaucratic bul-

lying by unelected, unaccountable Federal administrators.

The first, unilateral, untouchable decision by Solicitor Leshy reinterprets the 1916 Organic Act, allowing the National Park Service to block mining activity if it can prove waters flowing into the park will be impacted. This will have the immediate effect of ending all prospecting for lead in southwest Missouri, which accounts for 85 percent of all U.S. lead production.

The second, more far-reaching and devastating Solicitor opinion reinterprets the Magna Carta mining law, the 1872 Mining Act. In this instance, the Solicitor reversed over 125 years of history and precedent with the stroke of a pen, declaring the 1872 Mining Law restricts the number of 5-acre millsites to one per lode claim. Previously, the 1872 law allowed as many five-acre millsites as necessary for the safe and practical operation of a mine. If left unchanged, this opinion will effectively end mine operation and public land exploration nationwide.

Although the decision is currently blocked by legislative action, there is no guarantee that our prohibition will remain in place.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, matters get worse. The Bureau of Land Management, BLM, another Interior Department agency, has issued new hardrock mining regulations, in direct violation of congressional intent.

The BLM was directed by Congress to postpone new directives until a report by the National Academy of Sciences was issued regarding the need to revise 43 CFR, subpart 3809, concerning hardrock mining operations. Of course, the BLM pushed forward, lacking demonstrable need, with proposed regulations that will go into effect November 1 of this year.

Incorporating flawed science and flouting the will of Congress, these regulations may end any chance for mining to exist in America.

While Congress is considering a stay on this blatant power grab, we should take a moment to consider the commonsense recommendations the General Assembly of the State of Colorado has expressed in Colorado's House Joint Resolution 99-1023, sponsored by State Representative Carl Miller and State Senators Ken Chlouber and Doug Lamborn.

I submit for the RECORD the official position of the State of Colorado regarding BLM's proposed revisions to hardrock mining regulations.

Furthermore, I urge my colleagues to act favorably upon the instruction offered by the great State of Colorado.

House Joint Resolution 99-1023 is as follows:

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 99-1023

Whereas, The mining industry is vital to the economy of Colorado, with direct and indirect contributions to the state's economy that exceed \$7.7 billion annually; and

Whereas, Hardrock miners are the highest paid industrial workers in Colorado, earning average annual wages of approximately \$60,000; and

Whereas, The producers of gold, silver, lead, zinc, molybdenum, gypsum, and other minerals located under the general mining laws provide a source of high paying jobs in rural areas of Colorado whose economies are highly dependent upon resource extraction; and

Whereas, Lower mineral commodity prices and other economic factors continue to challenge this industry making it important that state and local governments fashion regulatory programs that are cost effective and yet sufficient to regulate the environmental impacts of hardrock mining activities on public and private lands; and

Whereas, The "Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976" requires that mineral activities on federal lands protect the environment and prohibits any mining activity that would result in unnecessary and undue degradation of these areas; and

Whereas, The Bureau of Land Management within the United States Department of the Interior implements the mandate of federal law through regulations codified at 43 C.F.R. subpart 3809, and these laws and regulations are among the many laws that require mineral producers to protect air, water, cultural, historic, fish, wildlife, and other resources; and

Whereas, The division of minerals and geology in the Colorado department of natural resources, though a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Land Management, is the lead agency responsible for regulating mining activity on both public and private lands; and

Whereas, Colorado effectively regulates mining operations pursuant to the "Colorado Mined Land Reclamation Act", part 1 of article 32 of title 34, Colorado Revised Statutes, that sets forth very comprehensive permitting, bonding, environmental management, monitoring, and reclamation requirements for hardrock mining activities on both public and private lands; and

Whereas, The Colorado General Assembly strengthened this law in 1993 requiring that mining operators using certain toxic chemicals in mineral extraction meet more stringent standards before receiving authorization to mine; and

Whereas, The United States Department of the Interior, through the Bureau of Land Management, has announced its intention to propose revisions to 43 C.F.R. subpart 3809, that would preempt, conflict with, and duplicate the very effective state program now in place, and replace, it with a plenary federal program that may well lessen the environmental protections available under state law; and

Whereas, In 1998 the United States Congress enacted legislation directing the National Academy of Sciences to perform a study of the adequacy of state and federal laws governing hardrock mining on public lands and submit its findings and recommendations before the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management may finalize changes to regulations under 43 C.F.R. 3809; and

Whereas, Notwithstanding the express mandate of Congress, the Bureau of Land Management proposed revisions to the regulations promulgated under 43 C.F.R. subpart 3809, in February, 1999, before the National Academy of Sciences has concluded, much less submitted, its study and recommendations, and the Bureau of Land Management