

NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

Board of Directors

Edward R. McNicholas
Chair
Sidley Austin LLP

Bruce E. Rosenblum
Vice-Chair
The Carlyle Group

Robert C. Ryan
Treasurer
American Red Cross

Kirsten Johnson-Obey
Secretary
NeighborWorks

Eric A. Bensky
Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP

Paul F. Caron
Microsoft Corporation

Bruce J. Casino
Attorney

Rajib Chanda
Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP

Dennis Dorgan
Fundraising Consultant

Dwight A. Fettig
Porterfield, Fettig & Sears LLC

Julia M. Jordan
Sullivan & Cromwell LLP

Steve Judge
Private Equity Growth
Capital Council (retired)

Father Alexander Karloutsos
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese
of America

Georgia Kazakis
Covington & Burling LLP

Pamela Malester
U.S. Department of Health and
Human Services (retired)

Tashena Middleton Moore
Attorney

G.W. Rolle
Missio Dei Church

Erin Sermeus
OWN TV

Jeffrey A. Simes
Goodwin Procter LLP

Vasiliki Tsaganos
Attorney

Robert Warren
People for Fairness Coalition

Maria Foscarinis
President
Executive Director

*Affiliations for identification
purposes only*

Dear Friends,

As I write, many of us are still stunned by the recent election results — I know I am. But one thing is crystal clear: our work is **now more important than ever before**, and I'm writing to ask you to **support us as generously as you can as we gear up for the challenges ahead**.

People experiencing homelessness are disproportionately members of racial and ethnic minorities, many are women, many are members of the LGBTQ community, some are immigrants. Many Americans are feeling economic pain — and millions are vulnerable to homelessness, just a missed paycheck or unexpected expense away from eviction or foreclosure. Many are families.

Families like Angela Spencer, and her nine-year-old son, Amarion. They became homeless when Angela was furloughed from her full-time job and lost her home to foreclosure.

In addition to the hardship of losing his home, Amarion almost had to face the loss of his school. Claiming that Amarion was no longer a resident of the district because he was homeless, his school district repeatedly unenrolled him—in violation of federal law.

With the help of the Law Center and our teamwork with a local attorney in Texas, Angela was able to re-enroll Amarion in school. Today, Angela and her son are no longer homeless, and Amarion is thriving—and has a chance for a better future.

As documented in our new report, **No Barriers**, children who change schools two or more times each school year are 50% less likely to graduate high school. Those who do not complete high school will face at least a \$9,000 penalty every year on their economic earnings throughout their lifetime.

Your help, teamed with our legal expertise, ensures that children are protected under the federal McKinney-Vento Act, which guarantees for all homeless children, the right to:

- Stay in their same school, even if they are temporarily housed in a different district;
- Receive transportation to and from school;
- Receive free school meals;
- Access to a full range of school services including special ed and gifted programs, sports and other extracurricular activities.

We were so pleased to honor Angela for her advocacy for her son's educational rights with our Personal Achievement Award at our 2016 McKinney-Vento Awards ceremony.

In her moving remarks accepting her award, Angela said: "We need everyone to understand how homelessness affects a child's ability to succeed in school...and what schools can do to alleviate the potentially harmful effects of homelessness on children." Unfortunately, many are not as fortunate as Angela and Amarion.

This past year, we celebrated major victories, including major new federal legislation strengthening the education rights of the over 1.6 million homeless children — children like Amerion—across the country, winning bi-partisan support in Congress.

Other victories included winning new rights for survivors of domestic violence, protecting their housing rights so they don't have to choose between staying with their abuser and becoming homeless. We defended the voting rights of homeless and other low income people, and won major victories in our fight against the criminalization of homelessness—and for housing.

And on November 15th, we released our new report, **Housing Not Handcuffs**, showing marked increases in the criminalization of homelessness. The report garnered national media attention, including the enclosed article from the **New York Times**, **helping the Law Center and our partners around the country make the case that criminalization is inhumane, ineffective, and costly—and that housing people instead makes fiscal, moral and policy sense**. We simultaneously launched our new national campaign with the same name – to redirect law and policy away from criminalization and towards housing homeless people instead. See our web site www.nlchp.org to learn more about the Law Center's 2016 accomplishments.

We would not be able to achieve these victories without your help. Your financial contribution today will help individuals like Angela and Amarion, and help us continue our critical work to reform systems and defend the rights of people experiencing homelessness. Please see enclosed message from Angela and Amarion to see the impact of your support on their lives.

Please consider making a donation of \$1,000, \$500, \$250, \$100, or another amount, to support the Law Center so we can continue our work and protect the rights of people who are the most vulnerable in our society – a gift of any size is truly appreciated.

This is an especially challenging time. Please stand with us as we stand with those who are most at risk and work to ensure that all voices are heard.

Thank you for your partnership, and for making our work possible.

Sincerely,



Maria Foscarinis

Founder & Executive Director

P.S. You can make your tax-deductible contribution today at www.nlchp.org/donate.