

**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD OF FREDERICO JUARBE JR  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LABOR  
FOR VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
FOR THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY  
OF THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**July 13, 2004**

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Waters and distinguished members of the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity, for the opportunity to outline the Department of Labor's important role in helping put homeless people on the path to self-sufficiency and more specifically, to express the Department's support for the proposed Samaritan Initiative Act of 2004.

Like each of you, we at the Department of Labor are committed to the Administration's objective of ending chronic homelessness by the year 2012. The proposed Samaritan legislation encourages the achievement of that goal by creating coordinated provisions of housing, health care, mental health and substance abuse treatment and other supportive services for the chronically homeless. The principles and concepts underlying this important initiative will result in key partnerships and collaboration among Federal, State and local authorities to support community efforts to successfully engage, house and reintegrate chronically homeless persons who are living on the streets and in shelters.

The Department supports the Samaritan legislation because our experience in serving the chronically homeless over many years demonstrates that collaboration, partnership and intervention are the essential ingredients for successful homeless programs. The Samaritan initiative incorporates all of these essential ingredients.

While the Department of Labor is not a direct funding partner in the Samaritan Initiative Act of 2004, we intend to support this important initiative through our network of established mainstream workforce programs.

With regard to the Department of Labor's own role in combating homelessness, we administer programs providing employment and training services that are crucial components in the comprehensive effort to end the cycle of chronic homelessness. We offer both mainstream and targeted employment-focused programs that help lead chronically homeless persons to self-sufficiency.

Our strategy focuses on helping those who want to work or become job-ready. The specific objectives of our strategy are: 1) to provide universal access to mainstream employment assistance and services, including those services authorized under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA); and 2) to identify the skill needs of today's workforce and address the skill deficiencies of the homeless population.

We are currently witnessing many successes, model programs and practices if you will, in America's Workforce Investment System, that aim at ending chronic homelessness by helping homeless people achieve self-sufficiency through a comprehensive approach that includes adequate income support which comes from employment. We offer the experiences of these model programs and their "best practices" which will help support and inform the Samaritan grantees, and to assist implementation of the Samaritan initiative with our Federal, State and local partners.

I would like to add that under the Administration's proposal to reauthorize WIA, America's workforce system will become even more responsive and effective for both employers and workers, including homeless individuals. Our WIA Reauthorization proposal will help improve access to workforce development programs by special populations, including the homeless. Under the reauthorization proposal, the workforce system will offer incentives to states that operate employment-focused programs for special needs populations, such as the homeless.

In addition to using the Workforce Investment System more effectively to serve the homeless, the Department of Labor has been effectively addressing the needs of homeless Americans through a number of model targeted intervention and

prevention programs that are included in the Department's Fiscal Year 2005 budget request, such as:

- 1) The Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Programs (HVRP);
- 2) The Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IVTP);
- 3) The Ready4Work and Serious and Violent Reentry Initiative;
- 4) The Jobs-Corp-Foster Care Recruitment Initiative;
- 5) The Department of Labor/Department of Housing and Urban Development 'Ending Chronic Homelessness through Employment and Training grants'; and most recently,
- 6) The President's new Prisoner Reentry Initiative, which helps incarcerated individuals make the transition back into their communities and reduce recidivism among returning inmates when they are released from the institutional setting.

The Department's hallmark homeless program is the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP). Chronically homeless veterans comprise nearly one-third of the chronically homeless population. The Department has been successfully dealing with this issue for many years. DOL recently awarded \$17 million in HVRP grants on July 1st to train and employ homeless veterans for good jobs. Through the Department's Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program, about 12,000 American veterans will be served this year in 31 states with an expected entered employment rate of over 65%.

Successful HVRP programs employ the same proven concepts that are the basis of the Samaritan legislation, i.e., collaboration, partnership and intervention. HVRP grantees focus on building capacity to serve homeless individuals by providing coordination and linkages to other supportive services such as housing, transportation, medical care, and substance abuse treatment. This is accomplished by partnering with the Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Veterans Affairs (VA), and Health and Human Services (HHS), as well as local faith-based and community-based organizations and social service agencies. The HVRP concept takes this a step further by heavily emphasizing job counseling, job training, job referral, job placement and job retention services, which is what the DOL grants fund.

The Department's success in addressing homelessness, with both our mainstream and targeted workforce programs, is convincing evidence that passage of the Samaritan legislation will reduce chronic homelessness. This is because the Samaritan initiative will employ similar promising strategies that integrate systems of services and promote self-sufficiency and recovery among chronically homeless individuals.

As further evidence of the success that will likely result from the passage of the Samaritan legislation, the Department of Labor and the Department of Housing

and Urban Development entered into a similar collaborative initiative to award five “Ending Chronic Homelessness Through Employment” grants that we announced at last October’s full meeting of the Interagency Council on Homelessness. Through these unprecedented new grants, workforce investment boards and homeless housing service providers are today applying customized employment and permanent housing strategies in five major cities in the United States, so that chronically homeless people with disabilities may live, work and fully participate in their communities.

At the Department of Labor, we have learned from over two decades of addressing this issue that collaboration among Federal, State and local agencies and entities is key to operating successful programs that help chronically homeless individuals achieve self-sufficiency. That is why we believe the Samaritan initiative will work.

Mr. Chairman, the Department is committed to pulling together our resources and working with Congress, the Samaritan Federal partner agencies and all federal, state and local partners to achieve the President’s goal of ending chronic homelessness in 10 years. The Department believes that the Samaritan legislation will help achieve this goal.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a statement for the record regarding the Department's homeless programs and our support for the Samaritan Initiative.