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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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COUNTERTERRORISM
ASIA, THE PACIFIC,
CENTRAL ASIA, AND NONPROLIFERATION

April 28, 2021

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger:

I write to respectfully request \$2,400,000 in fiscal year 2022 funding for the Merrifield Crisis Response Center (MCRC) redesign.

The entity to receive funding for this project is Fairfax County Government, located at 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board's (CSB) Merrifield Center is a community-based behavioral health treatment center that provides 24/7/365 access to services. In addition to same-day assessment services, the Merrifield Crisis Response Center (MCRC) operates as an assessment site where law-enforcement officers can transfer custody of non-violent offenders who may need mental health, substance use disorder, or developmental disability services to a Crisis Intervention Team-trained officer or deputy assigned there, instead of taking them to jail.

Since the MCRC launched, Diversion First services have continued to expand to include: 24/7/365 onsite law enforcement; onsite medical assessment for psychiatric/crisis stabilization admission; a multi-disciplinary Community Response Team (CSB, Fire and Rescue, Peer Support, and law enforcement); 23-hour crisis stabilization beds; and, a regional hub for contracted services (alternative transportation) for transport of involuntary psychiatric admissions. This expansion in services has been critical to meet growing community needs, which have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, reconstruction is needed to sustain and expand program operations. Current program design and space is not conducive to the current pace of growth, and additional space and redesign would increase capacity to better meet community needs. In addition to space, security concerns have emerged which require the installation of quality security cameras, security film on building windows, equipment to secure the facility, and fall mitigation measures in the parking garage. This re-design is necessary due to significant programming changes since the opening of the building. The CSB embraces the nationwide movement to de-criminalize mental illness. Re-designing the lower level will allow the CSB to have expanded capacity to accept individuals with a mental health issue that have been detained by police under an Emergency Custody Order. Having this service allows our community to keep individuals with mental health issues out of jail and have quicker access to the appropriate care.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald E. Connolly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "G" and a long, sweeping underline.

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress
11th District, Virginia