



November 4, 2009

The Honorable Adam Schiff
United States House of Representatives
2447 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Schiff:

I write in strong support of the Honest Opportunity Probation with Enforcement (HOPE) Initiative Act of 2009.

The HOPE model has been shown in independent evaluation to reduce drug use, reduce crime and reduce incarceration -- all illusive but vitally important public safety goals for sentenced offenders on probation. This model of care is appropriate for the 5 million plus Americans who are under community supervision. HOPE complements the nation's impressive drug courts and offers a model for all of community corrections. HOPE was pioneered in Hawaii where it has worked closely and constructively with the local drug court in ways that enhance both important programs. HOPE does not compete with drug courts; it complements them and extends their reach deeper into the criminal justice system.

HOPE uses swift, certain, but not severe consequences for any drug use and failure to comply with the requirements of the offenders' release into the community. This is in dramatic contrast to the usual workings of the criminal justice system where monitoring for drug use is often haphazard and where the consequences of a positive drug test are so variable as to be uncertain and unpredictable. Worse yet, when sanctions are imposed they are often draconian. It is almost impossible to change human behavior with this pattern of reinforcement. In contrast, the HOPE approach uses intense monitoring and responds to all drug use and other violations with immediate but brief incarceration (a few days typically). This is a model for effective behavior change.

HOPE provides residential or intensive outpatient substance abuse treatment for all participants who choose to seek treatment as well as for participants who are unable to complete probation without returning to drug or alcohol use. HOPE links to treatment using "behavioral triage" which reserves treatment for HOPE participants who need (or desire) it. One of the many remarkable findings of the HOPE experience is that many probationers, even those with severe and chronic methamphetamine problems, are able to remain drug-free under intensive monitoring without treatment for up to 6 years.

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As the first Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the White House Drug Czar for Presidents Nixon and Ford, and since 1978 as President of the non-profit Institute for Behavior and Health Inc., I have focused my career not only on reducing substance abuse but on the roles of the criminal justice system in the prevention and treatment of substance abuse.

HOPE and other approaches that use the authority of the criminal justice system, including drug courts, provide a powerful tool to both reduce the demand for illegal drugs in the United States and to promote lasting recovery from the modern chemical slavery of addiction. See www.ibhinc.org for more information about me and about IBH's efforts to identify a small number of powerful new ideas that can significantly reduce illegal drug use in this country. HOPE stands at the top of that short list.

HOPE holds great promise for our country if widely implemented. The Honest Opportunity Probation with Enforcement (HOPE) Initiative Act of 2009 is a major positive step that will improve the nation's the public health and public safety.

I salute your efforts and support this important Bill. I encourage your colleagues to join you in this vitally important legislative effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. DuPont', written in a cursive style.

Robert L. DuPont, MD

RLD:cs