

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

Majority Leader Harry Reid
S-221 Capitol
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Minority Leader Mitch McConnell
S-230 Capitol
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

March 18, 2008

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell:

This week, the House of Representatives took an historic step in passing the "Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act" (H.R. 1424). Like the "Mental Health Parity Act" (S. 558), passed by the Senate in September, H.R.1424 seeks to end discrimination against millions of Americans suffering from mental illness and addiction.

Both of these bills would give those suffering from addiction and mental illness greater access to treatment services by prohibiting health insurers from placing discriminatory restrictions on mental health and substance abuse treatment that are different from other medical and surgical procedures. While we all recognize there are differences between these two pieces of legislation, we should not allow these differences to stand in the way of sending the strongest possible bill to the President before the end of the 110th Congress.

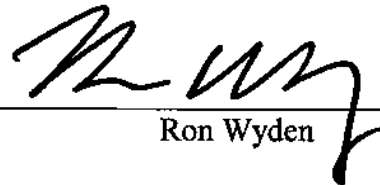
It is long overdue to finish the work started by Senators Pete Domenici and Paul Wellstone in 1996. Now that the House and Senate have passed their bills, millions of Americans with mental illness and addiction and their families are counting on us to put aside our differences and come to a bipartisan agreement. We should not let any of the differences between these two landmark pieces of legislation prevent the U.S. Congress from finishing this important job.

In sending this letter, we want to express our strong support for the intent of both these bills and let you know that we stand ready to work together to end the discrimination against people suffering from mental illness and addiction.

Sincerely,



Norm Coleman



Ron Wyden



Robert Menez

Chuck Scherer

Frank R. Laukberg

Albi Stenow

Ang Klobuchar

Johnnie

Kent Conrad

Jim

Tom Harkin

John Rood

Mary Gendrin

Bob

Byron L. Dorgan

Robert A. Neuberger

Ken Salazar

Patty Murray

105 / 1 Biden

Tom Condi

John F. Kerry

Shirley Brown

Hillary Rodham Clinton
