



# Invisible Children's Project

## SAMPLE LETTER TO A STATE LEGISLATOR (From a Professional)

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
Texas House of Representatives/Texas Senate  
P.O. Box \_\_\_\_\_  
Austin, TX Zip Code

Dear Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_:

As a professional interested in mental health issues, I request that you support increased funding for **community mental health services** in the Department of State Health Services during the Legislative Appropriations Process.

Texas ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in per capita funding for mental health services. More Texans receive mental health services through the criminal justice system than through the public mental health system. People with mental illnesses are ending up in emergency rooms and homeless shelters, and tragically, sometimes die of suicide when we do not have community support services available for them.

Mental health issues are health problems – public health problems. Inadequately funding community mental health services in the short term ends up costing taxpayers more in the long term. Individuals needing assistance become unemployed, imprisoned or institutionalized due to a lack of services. I work with families in **[city/county you and the legislator are from]** and I see families broken apart when a parent with a mental illness or a child with serious emotional disturbance can not receive the help they need.

A recent Mental Health Association in Texas survey of parents diagnosed with a mental health problem indicates that needs are high in our state: 29% of the parents said they currently need mental health services but do not receive it. For their children, 36% were diagnosed with mental illness, primarily depression, bipolar disorder and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, and 47% have behavior problems at home.

Treatment works. There are well-researched, evidenced-based practices for treating mental health issues. The community mental health system needs funding to implement these services. I strongly urge you to fully fund community mental health services within the Department of State Health Services. Valuable tax dollars and valuable lives of Texans are at stake. For more information please contact the Mental Health Association in Texas at (512) 454-3706 or visit the website [www.mhatexas.org](http://www.mhatexas.org).

Thank you,  
Your name  
Your address