



ORANGE COUNTY
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

TELEPHONE 407-836-7370 FAX 407-836-7360
201 SOUTH ROSALIND AVENUE, P.O. Box 1393, ORLANDO, FL 32801
mayor@ocfl.net

RICHARD T. CROTTY
MAYOR

July 30, 2009

The Honorable Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor, New York City
New York, New York 10007

Fax: (212) 312-0700

Dear Mayor Bloomberg,

I am disappointed and dismayed to learn about your ongoing program to relocate the homeless from New York City using one-way bus, train and plane tickets to destinations such as Puerto Rico, the Carolinas and Florida. This practice reminds me of the old "Greyhound Justice" of the south during the 1960's where offenders were put on busses headed out of town.

I am not opposed to the so-called "Homeward Bound" programs that send people back to their hometowns so long as there is a receptive family, a plan for their support and follow up. However, giving a homeless person a one-way ticket out of New York City does not address the core issue of homelessness, it just moves the homeless problem from one place to another.

Here in Orange County we are working hand in hand with the Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida to help homeless families and individuals return to self-sufficiency. We have a drop in shelter, a center for women and families and limited transitional housing. Thanks to some federal grants, we are beginning construction on a new men's shelter that will provide long-term case management.

Our Primary Care Access Network (PCAN) of eleven clinics is a model public private partnership that provides primary health care to thousands of people who are underinsured. But even with these vital assets, we do not have adequate infrastructure to handle an influx of the homeless from other parts of the country. All this does is shift someone else's budget burden onto our already cash strapped shoulders.

Therefore, I respectfully urge you to reconsider your homeless relocation program. New York is a great city, home of the Statue of Liberty on which is inscribed the words: "Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door!" As a fellow Mayor, I understand the economic challenges you face, but I do not believe the answer for the great city of New York is to put that burden on a one-way ticket to another place.

Sincerely,


Richard T. Crotty
Orange County Mayor