

WASHINGTON, DC (*July 6, 2012*) – Today Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) and 11 members of the Illinois Congressional delegation sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services in support of funding for the National Runaway Switchboard (NRS) to continue to serve as the national communication system for runaway and homeless youth.

The NRS is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization founded in 1971 with more than 150 volunteers who handle an average of 100,000 calls annually. Through hotline and online services, NRS provides nationwide crisis intervention, referrals to local resources, and education and prevention services to youth, families and community members. A federal grant to supplement funding that NRS receives from individuals, corporations, foundations was established in 1974 by the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.

“The National Runaway Switchboard has served as the national communication system for runaway and homeless youth for almost 40 years, handling more than 3 million calls in the process,” said **Rep. Schakowsky**. “It has led the way in crisis intervention, information sharing, and engaging in discussion with our country’s runaway and homeless youth. I am proud to support its grant application to continue serving in that important role.”

NRS is available 24 hours a day throughout the United States and its territories, including Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam. Among the services provided by the NRS include the 1-800-RUNAWAY free hotline, online educational materials at www.1800RUNAWAY.org, support for schools, community groups, and direct service providers as well as a database of more than 10,000 youth and family agencies.

The letter expresses support for the NRS application to continue to receive federal grant funding and the organization’s work as a resource for runaway and homeless youth for over 40 years.

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