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January 25, 1994

Honorable Jim Cooper
125 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515-4204

Dear Congressman Cooper:

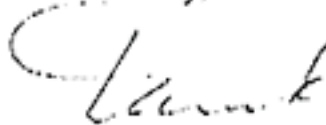
I valued the opportunity to talk with you at the Mental Health Liaison Group and appreciate your interest in the plight of ex-cult followers as related to health care issues. As Congress works on health care legislation, the American Family Foundation (AFF) and the Cult Awareness Network (CAN) ask you to keep in mind the thousands of psychologically abused ex-cultists who, having left their groups, (a) find themselves with no health coverage, (b) are liable to have pre-existing medical and mental health conditions, and (c) may be too confused or frightened to seek any help for a long time (often years, sometimes decades).

Most ex-cultists walk away or are discarded, sometimes with barely a minimal grasp of what has happened to them. They may leave after months or after decades. They may be young people or senior citizens. They may leave behind spouses, children or grandchildren, parents or grandparents, siblings or close friends. All too often, there is no family outside that is willing or available to help. They may join the ranks of the homeless or drift from one temporary situation to another.

No matter what Congress enacts, many ex-cultists simply will not buy health insurance as self-employed or make co-payments as employees or even sign up for government-paid insurance. We ask Congress to make sure that whenever such ex-cultists finally seek medical or mental health help, they will be able to join a meaningful care system that addresses both medical and mental health needs without arbitrary discrimination. No matter how long that takes, we also ask that neither statute nor regulations ever shut the door on such people for coming too late.

AFF and CAN would appreciate your continuing commitment to these goals and leadership in assuring their realization.

Best personal wishes.
Faithfully,



David J. Bardin
Counsel for AFF and CAN

P.S. I enclose a copy of last month's cult abuse policy and research project newsletter. We would like to include some of your thoughts in a forthcoming newsletter.