



May 19, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

On behalf of the 210,000 members and the more than 1,100 affiliates of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), I am writing to thank you for bringing forward H.Con.Res. 134, a resolution expressing support for designating Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month. As the nation's largest organization representing people with serious mental illness and their families, NAMI is proud to support this effort to enhance public awareness of mental illness, especially within minority communities.

NAMI is extremely grateful for this important recognition of the life of Bebe Moore Campbell – an accomplished author and advocate and long time member of NAMI's Ingelwood, CA affiliate. She was author of three New York Times bestsellers, *Brothers and Sisters*, *Singing in the Comeback Choir*, and *What You Owe Me*, which was also a LA Times "Best Book of 2001." Her other works include the novel, *Your Blues Ain't Like Mine*, which was a New York Times notable book of the year and the winner of the NAACP Image Award for Literature, her memoir, *Sweet Summer, Growing Up With and Without My Dad*, and her first nonfiction book, *Successful Women, Angry Men: Backlash in the Two-Career Marriage*.

Ms. Campbell's interest in mental illness was the catalyst for her first children's book, *Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry*, which was published in September 2003. This book won the NAMI Outstanding Literature Award for 2003. It tells the story of how a little girl copes growing up with a mother who is living with mental illness. Perhaps her most important work of fiction was *72 Hour Hold* – a gripping novel of family and redemption and a mother's struggle to save her eighteen-year-old daughter from the devastating consequences of bipolar disorder.

As an accomplished journalist Ms. Campbell contributed articles to the New York Times Magazine, The Washington Post, The Los Angeles Times, Essence, Ebony and Black Enterprise. She was also a regular commentator for National Public Radio's Morning Edition.

Madam Speaker, as you know, Bebe Moore Campbell's life was tragically cut short by brain cancer in November 2006. She is remembered everyday by NAMI members all across our nation. She is an ongoing inspiration to thousands and thousands of families

living everyday with mental illness, especially in minority communities. It is fitting for Congress to recognize her remarkable life and accomplishments with this resolution.

NAMI urges all members to vote in favor of H.Con.Res. 134. It is critical for Congress to recognize her life's work on behalf of people living with mental illness and their families, particularly those in underserved and minority communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Fitzpatrick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

Michael J. Fitzpatrick, M.S.W.
Executive Director