



Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding

Working to insure maximum federal resources for housing and community development.

May 8, 2007

Hon. David Obey, Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6015

Hon. Jerry Lewis, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6015

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Lewis:

We the undersigned are organizations concerned with the housing needs of low and moderate income Americans, and the community development needs of our nation's cities, suburbs, towns and rural areas. As such, we write to urge you, as you begin to consider 302(b) allocations for FY 2008, to provide adequate funding for Department of Housing and Urban Development programs that address these needs. We believe a substantial funding increase is necessary to begin to make up for several years of underfunding and to address crisis-level housing and community development problems faced by families and communities across the country.

HUD's housing and community development programs are key to the wellbeing of our people and our communities. Recent documentation by a network of charitable foundations and funders substantiates the fact that inadequate housing has strong negative effects on children's physical, emotional and cognitive health, and that programs that encourage decent, safe and affordable housing have a positive impact.¹ This is the latest in a long line of research showing that better housing and stronger community infrastructure mean improved child wellbeing, enhanced educational achievement, better health, lower crime, and more successful employment.

Funding for HUD suffered badly in the 108th and 109th Congresses. By the FY06 appropriation, with few exceptions HUD programs top to bottom were operating at the lowest levels in years. We are all very appreciative of your invaluable work to include increases in key HUD lines in the FY07 funding resolution. Yet much remains to be done: even with the FY07 increases, only one in four families eligible for Section 8 vouchers receives any federal low-income housing assistance; public housing communities face severe shortages in funding for upkeep and maintenance; CDBG, HOME, Housing

¹ Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, How Housing Affects Child Well-Being, 2006 (www.knowledgeplex.org/showdoc.html?id=251236).

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for the Elderly, Native American Housing, HOPWA, Housing for People with Disabilities, Lead Paint Reduction, the SHOP program and virtually all smaller HUD program lines remain funded at substantially lower levels than three years ago; and there has been no new funding in years for housing vouchers for reunifying families with children in foster care, youth aging out of foster care, or supportive housing for homeless veterans. This underfunding has a disproportionate impact on people of color, people with disabilities and others intended to be protected by fair housing laws, but no additional funding has been available for fair housing enforcement or other related programs. Most striking of all, as we write this letter three quarters of a million Americans remain homeless, with millions more housed in situations that are unstable, unhealthy, and/or markedly unaffordable.

This underfunding of the building blocks of community development and affordable housing threatens the future sustainability of many communities and deters critically needed private sector investment. We believe it is time for Congress to begin a serious effort to rebuild these important resources. We have worked hard to help members of Congress understand the necessity for expanded domestic discretionary funding, an understanding that is reflected in the Budget Resolution now working its way through Congress. The next step is to provide an allocation to the T-HUD subcommittee that will allow for a substantially larger HUD budget. We hope that you will call on any or all of us to work with you to support this request, and we look forward to a day in the near future when HUD once again has the resources to do its full part to solve the housing and development problems of our nation's communities.

Sincerely yours,

Alliance for Healthy Homes
American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging
The Arc of the United States
Association of Jewish Family and Children's Agencies
Coalition on Human Needs
Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Housing Task Force
Corporation for Supportive Housing
Council for Asian Pacific American Community Development
Council of Large Public Housing Authorities
Council of State Community Development Organizations
Enterprise Community Partners
Housing Assistance Council
The Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National AIDS Housing Coalition
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Association of Housing Co-ops
National Association of Affordable Housing Lenders
National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Community Reinvestment Coalition

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National Council of State Housing Agencies
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Housing Conference
National Housing Trust
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National NeighborWorks Association
National Disability Rights Network
Public Housing Authorities Directors Association
Travelers Aid International
United Cerebral Palsy
United Jewish Communities

cc: Hon. Nancy Pelosi
Hon. John A. Boehner
Hon. John W. Olver
Hon. Joseph Knollenberg