July 22, 2013

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Committee on Appropriations THUD Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations THUD Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Mikulski, Vice Chair Shelby, Subcommittee Chair Murray, and Subcommittee Ranking Member Collins:

The undersigned organizations are members of the Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding (CHCDF), a group of more than 70 national groups representing all 56 states and territories, dedicated to strong federal housing and community development funding for lower-income families and communities. We write to congratulate you on your work to produce a bipartisan Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) appropriations bill, S. 1243, that, under difficult fiscal circumstances, makes a positive contribution to the ability of Americans to afford decent housing and live in communities that are healthy and productive.

HUD programs that are preserved and protected in the Senate bill have important positive impacts on the wellbeing of Americans, particularly those who face poverty, disability, and other vulnerabilities. These are not the people upon whose backs the federal budget should be balanced. The $10 billion difference between the Senate and House bills demonstrates that without a reasonable 302(b) allocation of funding for HUD programs, it would have been impossible for the Senate to avoid burdening these vulnerable households.

HUD’s work also has a broader positive impact for all Americans. Investment in safe, decent, and affordable housing and more vibrant communities improves child well-being, enhances educational achievement, improves health, lowers crime, and increases employment access and stability. In both the short and long term, funding of housing and community development programs decreases costs for federal, state and local governments. HUD’s programs are crucial to preventing hardship and fostering economic recovery, as they address basic needs of our nation’s residents.

The Senate's THUD bill would help pull HUD programs back from the abyss created by underfunding and sequestration in recent fiscal years. Hundreds of news reports from around the country have already demonstrated that sequestration of HUD programs is harming many low income vulnerable Americans. The frequency and gravity of these impacts will continue to increase as sequestration cuts are further implemented. We thank the Senate Committee on Appropriations for doing its part, on a bipartisan basis, to correct this mistake for vulnerable Americans. We urge the full Senate to pass this important legislation because of its support for HUD funding.

Sincerely,
Community Action Partnership
Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Housing Task Force
Council of Large Public Housing Authorities
Council of State Community Development Agencies
CSH
Enterprise Community Partners
Habitat for Humanity International
Housing Assistance Council
LeadingAge
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Lutheran Services in America
Mercy Housing, Inc.
National AIDS Housing Coalition
National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials
National Center for Healthy Housing
National Center for Housing & Child Welfare
National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development
National Community Development Association
National Council of State Housing Agencies
National Disability Rights Network
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Housing Conference
National Housing Trust
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
National Leased Housing Association
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National NeighborWorks Association
National Network to End Domestic Violence
Poverty & Race Research Action Council
Public Housing Authorities Directors Association
Rebuilding Together
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future
The Arc of the United States
The Community Builders

cc: The Honorable Harry Reid
    The Honorable Mitch McConnell