

April 25, 2016

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

The undersigned organizations, which include a broad cross-section of stakeholders in the housing affordability realm, urge Senate passage of “The Housing Opportunities through Modernization Act” (H.R. 3700), without delay and without additions to this bill that makes commonsense reforms to federal housing policy. The U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 3700 unanimously on February 2, 2016. This legislation represents the best of bipartisan work and compromise.

Our nation faces tremendous housing needs. This legislation is an important step forward to address a number of significant items that have enjoyed broad consensus over the years. There is more to be done to address housing and community development needs, but H.R. 3700 represents solid progress in the right direction. If enacted, this bipartisan bill would build on the effectiveness of federal rental assistance while achieving some modest savings.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s rental assistance programs face difficult budget pressures, and this reform legislation would help state and local agencies stretch limited funds and reduce the risk of harsh cuts in assistance to families in need. These reforms ease administrative burdens for housing agencies and owners, while delivering fairer and more efficient assistance to low-income families. In addition, the bill provides new tools to preserve affordable housing, reduce homelessness, increase self-sufficiency and expand access to areas of greater opportunity.

Importantly, H.R. 3700 would make these improvements while leaving in place the core characteristics that have helped make federal rental assistance programs effective. The bill’s rental assistance provisions, taken together, also avoid any cost increase, and could modestly reduce the cost of providing the current level of assistance.

Congress has vetted most of the bill’s provisions for nearly a decade as part of earlier proposals that have had broad support in Congress and among stakeholders, but have never become law. We urge the Senate to move with urgency to approve the House-passed version of H.R. 3700 and to send it the President’s desk for enactment.

We stand ready to work with you to help achieve this goal.

Catholic Charities USA
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
Consortium for Citizens With Disabilities
Housing Task Force
Corporation for Enterprise Development
CSH (Corporation for Supportive Housing)
Council for Affordable and Rural Housing
Council of Large Public Housing Authorities
Enterprise Community Partners
Housing Assistance Council
Housing Partnership Network
Institute of Real Estate Management
Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States
LeadingAge
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF)
Manufactured Housing Institute
National Affordable Housing Management Association
National AIDS Housing Coalition
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Apartment Association

National Association of Affordable Housing Lenders
National Association of Home Builders
National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials
National Association of Housing Cooperatives
National Association of REALTORS™
National Council of State Housing Agencies
National Development Council
National Disability Rights Network
National Housing Conference
National Housing Law Project
National Housing Trust
National Leased Housing Association
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National Multifamily Housing Council
NETWORK, a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Public Housing Authorities Directors Association
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future (SAHF)
Technical Assistance Collaborative
The Salvation Army, National Headquarters