

The Honorable Jack Reed  
728 Hart Senate Office Building  
United State Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reed,

re: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

On behalf of numerous organizations who have endorsed the ***Protect Our Homes*** campaign, we urge Congress and the Senate Transportation, Housing, Urban Development and Related (THUD) Agency to address our nation's severe shortage of housing resources at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). We seek Congress' support for individuals and families struggling with the rising cost of rent and the severe threats the President's proposed budget places on their housing stability. We call on you to:

1. **Lift the low federal spending caps**
2. **Ensure there are zero cuts to the HUD budget**
3. **Adequately invest in the proven programs that are reducing housing instability in communities across the country**

Where we live impacts every aspect of our lives. Where we call home affects the groceries we buy, where we send our kids to school, where we work, and how we thrive in our community. At every stage of life, where we live is the foundation for our health, education, safety, and economic well-being. That is why our campaign has support from national, state, and local businesses, transportation agencies, housing and community development organizations, communities of faith, disability organizations as well as municipal, tribal and state governments.

The Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA) required low federal spending caps and have decreased funding for housing and community development programs, impacting the ability of Congress to invest in proven housing solutions. HUD funding was 8.4% lower in 2016 than in 2010, adjusted for inflation. To continue helping families and communities at current levels for FY18, HUD needs to be funded at \$2.3 billion and USDA at \$24 million for housing and community development programs over FY17 spending levels. **We urge Congress to provide relief from the austere spending caps requirements and support housing security for low income communities.**

#### **What's At Risk?**

When families spend more than 30% of their income on housing, they often don't have enough money to pay for other necessities like food, medicine and transportation. Far too many children are being raised in families forced to choose between paying rent or putting food on their table. Investments in affordable housing have not kept pace with demand and are critical to sustaining our communities and ensuring families thrive.

As rents continue to rise across the nation, housing infrastructure is deteriorating. The lack of investments in proven programs like Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and

HOME funds leave every congressional district impacted by the lack of housing resources. Affordable housing is central to jobs and growing local economies. It's critical to children's success in school and vital to our community's positive health outcomes.

**Federal rental assistance, primarily in the form of Housing Choice Vouchers, Section 8 Project-based Rental Assistance, or Public Housing, has assisted over 5 million low-income households.** The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program is the nation's largest rental assistance program.

**The proven programs at HUD sharply reduce housing instability, homelessness, poverty, and other hardships among families with children.** More than 11 million families now spend the majority of their income on rent, and family and young adult homelessness rates continue to rise. HUD helps struggling seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, and working families keep food on the table and a roof over their head. More than half of assisted households are elderly or people with disabilities; most of the rest are families with children. **In 2014, rental assistance helped more than 340,000 veteran families gain access to affordable homes.** Without fully funding the needs HUD is designed to address, these modest gains in housing stability will be negated.

Increasing and preserving access to affordable housing—especially in areas of opportunity—helps families climb the economic ladder, leads to greater community development, and bolsters economic productivity. Community development assistance is vital for rural, urban and suburban areas to revitalize distressed neighborhoods, address urgent community needs, and provide for critical public services and economic development.

#### **Housing is a Smart Investment**

We all benefit from investing in affordable housing. Building 100 affordable homes generates \$11.7 million in local income, 161 local jobs in the first year alone and \$2.2 million in revenue for local governments. **People who live in affordable homes invest 5x more on healthcare and 3x more on nutritious foods.**

While we must work to reduce our nation's deficit over the long-term, low-income families, many of whom are already struggling to get by, would be severely affected by further cuts to HUD.

State and local governments rely on the resources provided by HUD to meet their communities' most basic needs across the country. Providing additional federal resources through proven, effective HUD programs will allow America's neighborhoods to thrive and meet the needs of our most vulnerable citizens.

We urge you to provide relief from the low budget caps required by sequester and ensure affordable housing, community development, and our most vulnerable populations receive the highest amount of funding possible.

Sincerely,

Access Press Ltd, Minnesota Disability Community Newspaper  
Aeon  
Anna Marie's Alliance  
Anoka County Community Action Program, Inc.  
Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA)  
Ain Dah Yung Center  
Alliance Housing Inc  
Amherst H. Wilder Foundation  
Arc West Central  
Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency  
Autism Society of Minnesota (AuSM)  
Avenues for Homeless Youth  
Avivo  
Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative  
Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis  
Center City Housing Corp.  
Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota  
Clare Housing  
City of Lakes Community Land Trust  
City of Minneapolis  
CommonBond Communities  
Community Action Partnership of Hennepin County  
Community Involvement Programs  
Cornerstone  
Elder Justice Center  
Flannery Construction  
Fraser  
Freeborn County Crime Victim's Crisis Center  
GG Capital, LLC  
Hearth Connection  
HOME Line  
HOPE Coalition  
Hope Community  
Hope House of St. Croix Valley  
House of Charity  
Housing for All  
Housing & Redevelopment Authority Of Virginia, MN  
Housing Justice Center  
Inquilinxs Unidxs por Justicia  
Jewish Community Action  
Laura Baker Services Association  
Life House, Inc.  
Listening House of St. Paul, Inc.  
Living Well Disability Services  
Loaves and Fishes Community  
Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota  
Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD)  
Mahube-Otwa Community Action Partnership

Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid  
Minneapolis Public School  
Minnesota AIDS Project  
Minnesota Budget Project  
Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless  
Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities  
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits  
Minnesota Elder Justice Center  
Minnesota Homeownership Center  
Minnesota Housing Partnership  
Minnesota Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (MOFAS)  
New Ulm EDA  
Northland Counseling Center, Inc  
NUMAS Haus  
Our Saviour's Community Services  
Our Saviour's Housing  
Partners for Affordable Housing  
Peace House Community  
People Serving People  
Perspectives, Inc.  
PRG, Inc.  
Project for Pride in Living, Inc  
Range Transitional Housing, Inc.  
Rice County Habitat for Humanity  
RS EDEN  
Simpson Housing Services  
Southwest Minnesota Continuum of Care  
Start Today Hennepin  
TC Habitat for Humanity  
The Alliance  
The Arc Greater Twin Cities  
The Arc Minnesota  
The Arc MN Southwest  
The Salvation Army Northern Division  
Twin Cities Housing Development Corporation  
Urban Homeworks, Inc.  
Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People (VEAP)