

# United States Senate

March 30, 2020

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
and Urban Development, and Related  
Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
and Urban Development, and Related  
Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Collins and Ranking Member Reed:

As Congress considers the Fiscal Year 2021 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we strongly urge the Subcommittee to support the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Public Housing Operating Fund and Public Housing Capital Fund. We respectfully request \$4.659 billion for the Public Housing Operating Fund and \$5 billion for the Public Housing Capital Fund.

Federal investment is essential to operating and preserving public housing, which provides affordable homes to over 1 million low-income American families, nearly two-thirds of which are headed by an elderly person or person with disabilities, and 40 percent of which include children. The Public Housing Operating Fund provides the subsidies necessary to cover the difference between the rents paid by residents and the operating costs of the property. This funding supports the operation, management, and maintenance of affordable rental housing for more than 2 million residents throughout the country. However, due to significant federal funding cuts, public housing agencies have not received full funding for their daily operations since Fiscal Year 2010. With decreased federal investment, public housing agencies are forced to make difficult decisions, often forgoing preventative maintenance and delaying repairs, factors which ultimately undermine the ability to provide safe and affordable housing to the most economically vulnerable families.

The Public Housing Capital Fund is the primary source of funding to preserve these publicly owned affordable homes. Despite the large historic federal investment in public housing, the federal government has not provided adequate funding to maintain this housing, threatening its long-term viability. The public housing inventory has a growing capital needs backlog, currently estimated at \$70 billion, and increasing by an average of \$3.4 billion each year. According to HUD's estimates, we lose 10,000 units of public housing every year due to physical obsolescence and disrepair. As unmet capital needs continue to accrue, residents are increasingly exposed to unsafe and unhealthy conditions. And yet, we know federal investments in capital repairs has a proven track record. For every dollar invested in public housing capital repairs, it generates more than two more in indirect economic activity. Without the necessary tools to preserve this critical public infrastructure, our most vulnerable families, youth, veterans at risk of homelessness, and seniors will be left with fewer safe and affordable housing options.

We know that the Subcommittee, under your leadership, has worked to maintain our affordable housing resources in light of the nation's growing shortage of affordable housing. You have also sought to invest in public housing specifically. We recognize that this year's budget decisions are difficult. However, we urge you to increase investments in public housing

to ensure that it meets the needs of current residents and preserves this valuable and vital affordable housing for the future. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

/s/ Robert Menendez

Robert Menendez

/s/ Sherrod Brown

Sherrod Brown

/s/ Edward J. Markey

Edward J. Markey

/s/ Catherine Cortez Masto

Catherine Cortez Masto

/s/ Tammy Duckworth

Tammy Duckworth

/s/ Angus S. King, Jr.

Angus S. King, Jr.

/s/ Margaret Wood Hassan

Margaret Wood Hassan

/s/ Richard J. Durbin

Richard J. Durbin

/s/ Kirsten Gillibrand

Kirsten Gillibrand

/s/ Dianne Feinstein

Dianne Feinstein

/s/ Tim Kaine

Tim Kaine

/s/ Mazie K. Hirono

Mazie K. Hirono

/s/ Richard Blumenthal

Richard Blumenthal

/s/ Bernard Sanders

Bernard Sanders

/s/ Elizabeth Warren

Elizabeth Warren

/s/ Maria Cantwell

Maria Cantwell

/s/ Michael F. Bennet

Michael F. Bennet

/s/ Brian Schatz

Brian Schatz

---

/s/ Debbie Stabenow  
Debbie Stabenow

---

/s/ Jeffrey A. Merkley  
Jeffrey A. Merkley

---

/s/ Amy Klobuchar  
Amy Klobuchar