

**Campaign for Housing and Community Development  
Funding**  
*Working to insure maximum federal resources for housing and community development.*

September 3, 2004

Hon. Bill Frist  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510-7010

Hon. Tom Daschle  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510-7020

Hon. Dennis Hastert  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-6501

Hon. Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-6537

Hon. Josh B. Bolten  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
Eisenhower Executive Office Building  
725 – 17<sup>th</sup> St., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Madam/Sirs:

The undersigned national organizations write to ask you to reject current proposals before Congress that cut FY2005 funding for HUD housing and community development programs. We urge you to seek adequate funding for these vitally important programs. We also ask that you reject fundamental changes to the Section 8 voucher program.

There is an affordable housing crisis in our country today. Housing costs have grown faster than wages and inflation. Millions of families, seniors, persons with disabilities,

and veterans are being squeezed out of the housing market.

HUD's housing and community development programs constitute an essential response by the federal government to this crisis. In light of America's housing needs, the funding levels proposed by the Administration's FY2005 budget and the House Appropriations Committee-reported HUD spending bill are inadequate. Inadequate funding would destabilize our nation's vulnerable communities and withhold essential help from many of the lowest income households.

Affordable housing promotes access to jobs and employment stability, better public health, and improved school performance for children. It reduces homelessness and its associated costs to tax payers. It provides a dignified existence for seniors and people with disabilities. It means stronger communities for everyone. Federal investment in community and economic development helps localities meet infrastructure demands of population growth, catalyze jobs and private-sector investment, and to reposition themselves in the changing global economy.

Underfunding HUD's housing and community development programs also undermines rental property owners' efforts to make their properties available to low income people, bankers who make loans to improve their communities and rely on a partnership with HUD, governors and mayors who have signed on to the Administration's campaign to end chronic homelessness through supportive housing, investors who are key partners in housing community development programs, and other leaders who want their communities to be better places and have believed that the federal government will be a partner in this undertaking.

For all these people, as for the solid majority of Americans, affordable housing is a priority. Polling shows that Americans view increased affordable housing for disadvantaged people as an important and desirable use of taxpayer dollars. A July 2004 National Low Income Housing Coalition poll found that 73% of likely voters said that they support government investment in housing to allow low income parents to provide decent homes for their children.

Despite this strong support for housing funding, the Administration's budget request and the House Committee bill would do serious harm to HUD's housing and community development programs and the people who rely on them. The Administration-proposed cuts to Section 8 could mean a quarter million fewer families housed.

The House Committee-reported bill would restore most of the Section 8 funding necessary to maintain current services, but at the expense of virtually all other HUD programs. Under the House bill, homeless programs would be forced to leave more people on the streets; public housing would be at risk as needed maintenance and capital funding is deferred; housing programs for seniors, people with disabilities, and people

with AIDS would be forced to downsize; HOME and CDBG funding needed by cash-strapped communities and states would be cut; public housing agencies would be hamstrung in their ability to administer programs; and the undermining of the Section 8 program would continue.

Both the Administration's proposal and the House Committee's bill are unacceptable. We call on Congressional leaders and the Administration, in their final negotiations on FY2005 appropriations, to provide adequate funding for HUD to continue to strengthen these programs and our communities.

Sincerely,

AIDS Action  
The AIDS Institute  
Alliance for Children and Families  
Alliance for Healthy Homes  
American Academy of HIV Medicine  
American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging  
American Friends Service Committee  
American Network of Community Options and Resources  
The Arc of the United States  
Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)  
Call to Renewal  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children's Defense Fund  
Church Women United  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Corporation for Supportive Housing  
Council of State Community Development Agencies  
The Enterprise Foundation  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Human Rights Campaign  
Institute Justice Team, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas  
League of Women Voters of the United States  
Local Initiatives Support Corporation  
Lutheran Services in America  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National AIDS Housing Coalition  
National Alliance to End Homelessness  
National Association of People with AIDS  
National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems  
National Association of Housing Cooperatives

National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials  
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Community Development Association  
National Community Reinvestment Coalition  
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare  
National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Fair Housing Alliance  
National Head Start Association  
National Housing Conference  
National Housing Law Project  
National Housing Trust  
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty  
National Low Income Housing Coalition  
National Mental Health Association  
National Minority AIDS Council  
National Policy and Advocacy Council on Homelessness  
National Puerto Rican Coalition  
National Rural Housing Coalition  
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby  
Poverty and Race Research Action Council  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office  
Service Employees International Union  
The Title II Community AIDS National Network  
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations  
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee  
United Cerebral Palsy  
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries  
The United Methodist Church—General Board of Church and Society  
United States Conference of Mayors  
United Way of America  
Volunteers of America  
Wider Opportunities for Women

cc: Hon. Ted Stevens  
Hon. Robert C. Byrd  
Hon. Christopher “Kit” Bond  
Hon. Barbara Mikulski  
Hon. C.W. Bill Young  
Hon. David Obey  
Hon. James T. Walsh

Hon. Alan B. Mollohan