

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 5, 2015

The Honorable Susan Collins, Chairman
The Honorable Jack Reed, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Collins and Ranking Member Reed:

We are writing to express our strong support for both the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF) and the HOME Investments Partnerships Program (HOME) and urge you to reject any effort to reduce, divert, or eliminate funding from either program. Specifically, we strongly oppose the legislation passed by the House Committee on Appropriations to direct all NHTF resources into the HOME program in FY 2016 and to prohibit any funds from any source going to the NHTF.

Although both the NHTF and HOME provide funding for affordable housing, they serve different populations – neither of which can afford further reductions in assistance. While HOME focuses on providing housing for a range of low-income households, the NHTF is the only federal program that provides new money specifically to expand the supply of rental housing affordable to extremely low income (ELI) households, who in most of the country earn less than the federal poverty level.

Neither the NHTF nor HOME provide sufficient funding to meet current housing needs, and funding for HOME already has been cut by more than half since FY 2010. Yet the need for affordable rental housing is higher than ever. ELI families face a national shortage of 7.1 million affordable rental units, and half of U.S. renters – nearly 41 million households, 9 million more than a decade earlier – were paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing in 2012.

As you know, Congress acted to ameliorate this crisis when it established the NHTF as part of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 (HERA), which was passed with strong bipartisan support and signed into law by President Bush. Now that the Federal Housing Finance Agency has determined that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac meet the criteria to set aside NHTF funds required by HERA, it is time to allow the NHTF to fulfill its intended purpose of providing additional – not substitute – funding to meet the unaddressed housing needs of millions of Americans.

As leaders on the THUD Subcommittee, we know you understand the importance of decent, affordable housing to our families, youth, people with disabilities, and seniors. We look forward to working with you and appreciate your consideration of this request.

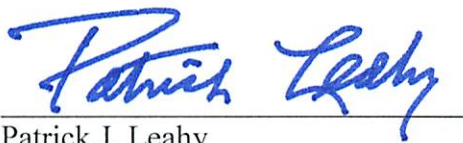
Sincerely,



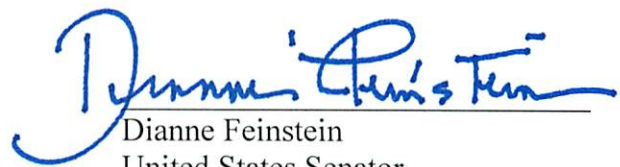
Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senator



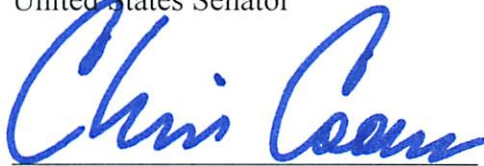
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



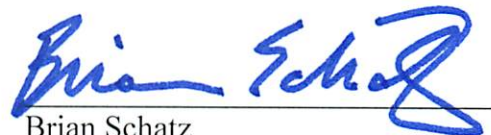
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Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Christopher Murphy
United States Senator



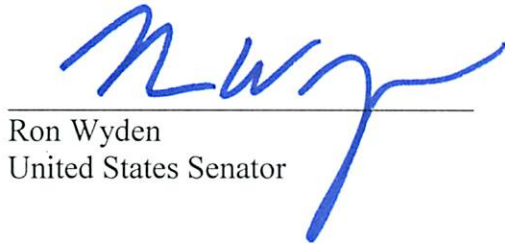
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Robert Menendez
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Elizabeth Warren
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Debbie Stabenow
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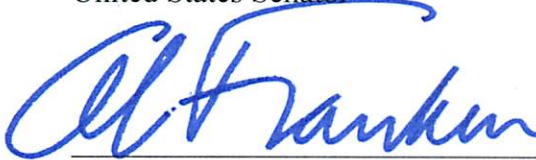

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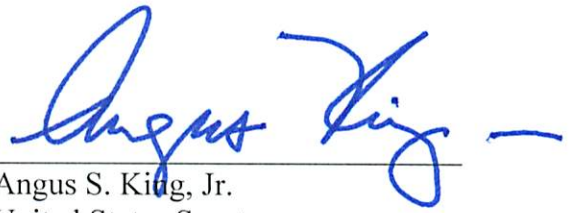

Joe Manchin III
United States Senator


Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

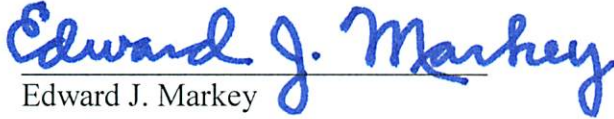

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