



Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding

Working to ensure maximum federal resources for housing and community development.

September 6, 2013

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
1011 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House Minority Leader
235 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of the leadership of the House and Senate:

Although there is widespread agreement that the federal budget should not be balanced on the backs of the poor that is precisely the effect of sequestration and the funding cuts to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that took place during the two years preceding sequestration. Underfunding HUD programs is hurting the country, and particularly low-income Americans, such as low-wage workers, people with disabilities, older Americans, and families living in low income neighborhoods. As Congress resumes work to appropriate FY14 federal funding, it is essential that Congressional leadership ensures that any final agreement on the FY14 budget provides funding that can at least achieve the standard set by the Senate HUD appropriations bill, S. 1243.

The undersigned national organizations are members of the Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding (CHCDF), which has been working with members of both parties to improve understanding of the role housing and community development investments play in improving the economy and the lives of Americans. We note that in the recent floor debates on the FY14 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) bills in both chambers, the importance of HUD programs achieved significant recognition. In the House, a THUD bill that would cut HUD programs even more deeply than sequestration met with a quick end after leaders brought H.R. 2610 to the floor; reports indicate that a bipartisan majority viewed the funding levels in the bill as substantially too low.

The Senate, on the other hand, considered a THUD bill that, though far from perfect, attempted to undo the damage caused by sequestration and other recent funding cuts. The motion for cloture, which would have stopped a filibuster, received the votes of a majority of Senators, but not the 60 needed to proceed. This was widely attributed to disagreement along party lines on the overall FY14 discretionary spending level, rather than the substance of the bill. In the course of other procedural votes on the bill, numerous members of both parties showed support for the roll-back of sequestration in the bill.

It is essential that Congressional leadership understands the lessons learned from the THUD floor debates, notably in the House member objection to passing a bill that would deeply cut HUD programs and support for a bill that would roll back these cuts. We cannot afford the continued drag on the economy that recent fiscal decisions have created, nor can we ignore the well-documented housing needs of the most vulnerable in this country. Sequestration is hurting America, in part through its declining investment in HUD programs. The multi-year decline in funding for many HUD programs is impeding our government's ability to maintain the nation's long-standing commitment to a decent home and suitable living environment for all. We can and we should fund HUD, at a minimum, at the level provided in the Senate FY14 appropriations bill, S. 1243.

Sincerely,

Coalition on Human Needs
Community Action Partnership
Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Housing Task Force
CSH
Enterprise Community Partners
LeadingAge
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Lutheran Services in America
Mercy Housing
National AIDS Housing Coalition
National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials
National Center for Healthy Housing
National Center for Housing and Child Welfare
National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development
National Community Development Association
National Council of State Housing Agencies
National Disability Rights Network
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Housing Conference
National Housing Trust
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
National Leased Housing Association
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National Network to End Domestic Violence
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Public Housing Authorities Directors Association
Rebuilding Together
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future
The Arc of the United States
The Community Builders, Inc.
Travelers Aid International

cc: The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
 The Honorable Richard Shelby
 The Honorable Harold Rogers
 The Honorable Nita Lowey
 The Honorable Patty Murray
 The Honorable Susan Collins
 The Honorable Tom Latham
 The Honorable Ed Pastor
