

National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC)
NLIHC-Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding Webinar
Wednesday, May 31, 2017
3:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Remote CART Captioning

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>> The broadcast is now starting. All attendees are in listen only mode.
>> Hi, everyone. Welcome to the CHCDF. About the Impact of President Trump's proposed severe budget cut to HUD and USDA. We're going to get started in one moment. A few people are still joining us. But I will let you know as we are getting started that you can type questions at any time, during webinar. And you'll-- [NO AUDIO].
>> Good morning, everyone. I think we're ready. We're glad-- we seem to have technological issues. We're glad to have you here on our CHCDF webinar. We're looking forward to get started in a few moments. Give people a bit more time to join us.
And in the meantime, I'm let you know that you can type questions in the question box. And we provide the copy of the slides from this presentation as well as the recording of the webinar. Online and in emailed to you tomorrow. Thanks so much.
>> [NO AUDIO].
>> [Volume fading].
>> National alliance, and homelessness. Sarah Mickelson, National Low Income Housing Coalition, and Gabriel Strachota from Community Voices Heard.
>> [NO AUDIO]. [Volume fading].
>> [Volume fading]
>> [NO AUDIO]
>> Give it one more second.
>> Sorry. We're going to-- [Volume fading] hi, folks, we're going in the midst of-- thank you for your patience. Just hang in there.
So I'm-- the sorry, I'm hearing feedback. Okay. Right. Sorry, folks, again. The budget appropriations timeline is very much-- normal-- so what that means is the appropriations committees might instead to move spending bills forward.
Using a top line number that's at a fiscal year, 18 spending caps. Those caps are in place because of the budget control act. They need to pass these bills by September 30. If they don't, they have to rely on a continuing resolution because of the delays. And I know a lot of people are, you know, he is special Friday from the Trump budget. They heard things that the budget might be dead on arrival. But it's important that we can't ignore the proposal that are included in the Trump budget. Even though the Congress writes the budget. With that in mind. I will turn it over to Doug Rice to give a budget outlook and think about the impact on the

Trump budget on housing vouchers.

>> Hi, everyone. Good to talk to you today. Could everyone hear me clearly?

>> Yes.

>> Yes, good. Okay, I'm going to just provide a quick overview of the broader context with this Trump budget was released. As most of you know, we've been operating under budget control act spending cap since 2011. These caps have been very stingy. There are separate caps for defense and non-defense programs.

Policy makers to their credit and I should say thanks to the strong work of advocates around the country. Policy makers, have prioritized funding for housing assistance programs, within these caps. But nonetheless, funding has been deeply cut over the last several years.

President Trump has proposed to cut funding for non-defense programs far below the already stingy spending caps for non-defense programs. He's proposing to cut \$54 billion from the cap level in 2018 for non-defense discretionary programs.

For HUD, that means a request of \$40.7 billion for HUD programs overall which is more than \$7 billion below the 2017 level. That's about a 15% reduction. And to specify those cuts, his budget proposal is really massive cuts in rental assistance and flexible grant of all kinds. They hurt families in many ways, as well as low income communities broadly. My colleagues are going to talk about these things separately.

I just want to add one other thing. At the end of the day, to avoid further cuts, in had HUD programs in the future and we really need to modify the budget control act spending caps that are in place. And it's essential to tell policy makers, if you talk to them about how important these programs are in your local communities, to also communicate the necessity of raising the current law caps.

To free up more resources for these programs --. okay, next slide, please. Thank you.

So a couple of pictures you just to fill in what I've been talking about. There's a lot going in this chart. The blue bars represents overall funding for non-defense discretionary programs relative to 010, adjusted for inflation. And as you can see under the budget control act caps, there have been deep cuts especially the first three years, 2011, 2012, 2013. And they've been moderated somewhat. But we're still far below the 010 level. And also included on the chart is a fainter blue line showing the cap level for 2018 which would reduce the amount of total funding somewhat inflation adjusted terms. Compared to that, the origin bars, relative to 010, adjusted for inflation. As you can see there have been significant cuts in funding for these programs. But the cuts have not been as deep as the cuts overall for non-defense discretionary programs which reflected policy makers efforts to prioritize funding for these programs under the very stingy caps.

Next slide, please. And none the less, of course, there have been substantial reductions in funding for a wide range of housing and community development programs. The deepest cuts have been in public housing and the major block grant programs. But there are cuts elsewhere, too.

Next slide, please. And just to give you another picture of where we are with the current law budget caps. As you can see, this shows non-defense funding. Adjusted for inflation. And the cap in 2018 is below the 2017 level there. So the current law caps are going to put us in a tight position in 2018 even before the kinds of cuts that President Trump is proposing in his budget.

Oops. The slide disappeared. Okay. Well, I'm not-- I don't know where my slide went. I'm going to talk about housing vouchers, the largest rental assistance program. The president's

budget request, a bit over \$17 billion. To renew housing vouchers. That's close to \$800 billion below the 2017 level. And well billion dollars below the amount needed to fully fund voucher renewals in 2018. And what that means is that, under the Trump request, we estimate that housing vouchers for about 250,000 families will be eliminated in 2018. And up on our website, there are data that breakdown those potential losses by Tate if you're interested in that. The request also includes \$1.6 billion for housing authority administrative fees, that's a reduction of about \$100 million dollars below the 2017 level. You've seen reductions in funding to do things like inspections to make sure units meet quality standards, to re-certificate income, to reduce errors and improve accuracy and payments and so on. This reduction would make it even harder for them to do that work.

To -- to offset the huge cuts that the budget includes for rental assistance programs, it also proposes a host of really radical represent policy changes. And I won't go into details but it includes things like imposing mandatory minimum rents on the poorest tenants. Increasing tenant contributions from 30% of income up to 35%. The net effect of these proposals would be to significantly raise rents on the poorest households. In a voucher, I should make clear, that these propose 58s would eventually apply to most HUD rental assistance program. There seems to go language in the budget seems to be faced in if they were adopted. In addition to raising rents on tenants in the voucher program, the effect of these proposals would be to sharply limit the housing options that families using vouchers have. And so really restrict them to neighborhoods in their communities where the rents are the absolute lowest and limiting their access to neighborhoods where there may be better opportunities for jobs or higher quality schools and so on.

And I'll just stop there.

>> Thank you, so much, Doug for that presentation. Next we're going to here from Linda Couch from LeadingAge.

>> Thanks, Elayne, thanks, Doug. I'm going to dig into the request for project based rental assistance and given Doug's presentation, you won't be surprised to hear that the request from the Trump administration is insufficient to renew PBRA contracts that will come up for renewal. In FY18. Their request seeks \$10.7 billion. And the national renewal need is about \$11.4 billion.

And you know, the answer in the budget documents about how you know, they're going to renew all the contracts at 10.7 is that the budget that Doug was explaining includes the implementation of several cost cutting measures.

And it's important to understand that the budget also says that the policies some of which Doug just outlined are policies that the administration sees as a starting point. As if works towards a more comprehensive package of rental assistance reforms. Next slide.

So I want to quickly go over some of these nasty rental assistance reforms that are in the request. The first one is it's called a pilot for the Section 8 PBRA section 202 and Section 811 programs. But it appeared to give the authority for HUD to use this latitude for all the programs. To increase tenant rent contributions to the greater of require, housing authorities and owners to increase tenant contributions which is of course the current standard for the contribution today. Or 35% of gross income. So doing away with income exclusions that tenants take advantage of today to reduce their income for purposes of figuring out what their rent is going to be.

So increasing rent by moving from the greater of 30% of adjusted income to a standard 35% of gross income.

Secondly and really damaging to section 202 and Section 811 programs which rely on the participation of private landlords is that there is a freeze in the HUD budget. There is a provision that would allow the HUD secretary to suspend project rent increases from HUD and FY18 for those three programs. PBRA, section 202 and section 811. These are the rent increases that properties normally get every year based on an annual adjustment factor or budget rent increase or updated market study. These are part of the contracts. Part of the deal HUD has made with the private owners. We're asking for a one year suspension of that part of the deal.

Third, a proposal to eliminate utility reimbursements for tenants when those utility reimbursements would exceed minimum rent paid by families. Something that was going to impact again the lowest income residents. And then on the next slide, this proposal to impose require \$50 minimum rent in all housing programs. So right now, public housing authorities for their public housing and voucher units can have a \$50 HIIN minimum rent up to a \$50 minimum rent. Many of them do, many of them don't. Some of them have a at that dollars minimum rent. A few of them don't have a minimum rent at all.

for the project based Section 8 program today, the existing authorities has allowed the HUD secretary a minimum rent up to \$50. Years ago, I don't remember which HUD secretary set the PBRA minimum rent at \$25. The proposal that's in the budget request would set a other dollars minimum rent for all housing programs including section 202 and 811 programs and those subsidized not through Section 8 but through project assistance promises. They don't have minimum rent currently. We have gone through these minimum rent policy, proposals before. So we know that, by definition, a \$50 minimum rent only impacts residents with incomes of less than \$2,000 a year. So they are-- they're just running the very, very lowest income residents for probably not a lot of money.

The next slide real quickly on the 202 and 811 accounts, I guess what you need to know is for the 202 account, HUD asks for a little bit more than the program received in 2017 which would be okay. But it's still completely insufficient to renew all the contracts we know are coming up for renewal next year. For the 811 account, they ask for a deep cut, a 17% cut compared to 2017. Even though we know-- HUD knows that another thousand units are going to be renewing next year for the first time.

The technical assistance collaborative, has run numbers, and it's their clear sense, even if these horrible policy changes were to be put in place, they still wouldn't get you the savings you needed to fully fund the program. Just the funding levels are will any insufficient. They also ask between these two accounts for the HUD secretary to have this odd smoking mirrors authority to transfer up to \$35 million to from the 202 to 811 account and vice versa. On the next slide, on the 202 program, the HUD secretary does ask for the rental assistance demonstration to be expanded to include the newer 202s. And they seek an increase for service coordinators. But if you're not going to renew all the 202 properties, I don't see the point in asking for -- it's ridiculous that they're asking more money for service coordinators but not enough to renew the contracts.

On the next slide, the HOPWA program, people will recall, last year after many years of effort, the advocates led by the national aids housing coalition. Secured a formula update for the HOPWA program as part of HOTMA. The FY17 bill got bumped up a bit so programs funded by the old formula wouldn't be harmed by the new formula program participants.

For FY18 though, HUD is seeking to roll back funding back to FY15 levels. It's a full \$55 million cut compared to where the national AIDS housing coalition needs to be for next year to

expand the program to where it needs to be accord to go the new formula and to protect the existing program participants.

So not-- I'll just end by saying, it's not an acceptable budget for these accounts I just reviewed. And I'll pass the torch.

>> Thank you so much, Linda. Before we move onto our next speaker, we're going to take a few questions. So I'm going to hand the phone over to Sarah Jay.

>> Hi, everyone. This is Sarah. With the questions and also a reminder, we're sorry about the issues going on in the beginning of a webinar. We'll send out the recording and slide. It wasn't a part of the PowerPoint presentation. We'll include all of that, to you. And a few questions for Doug and for Linda, there's usually a lot of question and concern on how rad plays into the draft on PBRA.

>> I have to go back and look at the request. I mean there is a small, I was looking at that yesterday. There is rad is budget neutral. So when programs, um, change their funding platform from public housing to PBRA. It should be increased in the PBRA account and not decreasing it. I'm not sure what the numbers are there. But say, you know, any public housing authority, the public-- but the, those subsidies, the similars associated with them should be showing up slowly in the PBRA program. I don't know, Doug if you have a better answer.

>> On the one hand, the budget proposes to eliminate the rad cap which is currently a couple hundred thousand units or so. However, with the-- as Linda mentioned, rad conversions are done on a budget neutral basis. So an agency's current public housing funding is what determines the base subsidy of their future rental assistance contract. Rad becomes useless in a budget scenario where public housing funding is cut by almost 30 percent. Because the funding baseline would be too low to sustain rental assistance contracts and fund rehab. With respect to current units what have converted to rad, of course, those are all operating now with project based voucher or Section 8 rental assistance contracts. So the funding for those units is in fact, dependent on renewal funding for the Section 8 accounts. And to the extent that there are shortfalls in renewal funding in the Section 8 account, they could affect funding for those current rad contracts.

>> Thank you, both. I think Ed has an addition.

>> We shouldn't be talking because I just got back from vacation, looking at congressional justification. I would throw it out there for people to explore further and correct me. But looking at the project based rental assistance congressional justification, it talks about transferring money from the public housing operating fund to capital fund to PBRA in 16 and 17. I don't know if it's a typo or not, 2018 request, exclude an estimated \$125 million transfer. So O. we'll have to dig into that and clarify it going forward.

>> Great. Thanks so much. We have some other pretty specific questions, we'll answer those off line. If you have clarify indication questions and go deeper to what Doug and Linda discussed, continue to enter that in the question box. Keep those coming certainly as we continue.

>> Thank you so much, Sarah. And with that we move onto our next speaker, Tess Hembree who will talk about public housing and formula block programs.

>> Thank you. And I apologize on the outset. There's construction outside my window. Sorry about that.

So looking at public housing under the president's budget, the operating fund and the capital fund are both hit devastatingly by cuts. Operating funds, all of the policy provisions regarding rent that we talked about with the voucher program apply to public housing as well. So the ban

on utility reimbursement, mandatory minimum rent, increase contribution all would apply to the public housing residents as well. We don't believe that it would cover the proposed kits to the operating fund which would be \$500 million for fiscal year 18 if the President's budget is implemented. It's an 11% cut. It wouldn't give the funds they need to operate public housing. In addition the capital fund is hit terribly as well. The proposed funding level for fiscal 18 is a total of \$628 million. Which is a \$1.3 billion lower than the current funding levels. These are harsh cuts because the maintenance backlog would be \$26 billion in 2010 which is of course, seven years ago. And it's been accruing at a rate about \$3.4 billion per year. Even with current funding levels, the accrual rate is not being met. It's going to dramatically increase the number of units lost per year and the impact on residents living in units that no longer could be maintained.

Moving onto the community development program. As bad as housing looks, community development looks worse in the President's budget. The budget calls to completely eliminate the home program and the community development block grant. The budget includes language that says that the Federal Government should dissolve, community and economic development on the State and local level and redirect federal resources to other activities. The Federal Government, under the President's budget is stopping back from any role in funding community development and handing that over to the states and localities which is an unfortunate proposal and is really going to strain the budget for state and local governments. This is particularly harsh for CDBG. They're been cut by 25% as it is. Home has had a worse time. 40% since fiscal year 12. The devastating impact that it would have on communities has been outlined in high profile newspaper articles. So that's good. New York times has done how CDBG touches lives. Additionally, the home cut is short sighted given the housing crisis we find ourselves in. Everybody seems to be facing a housing crisis at the moment. Grant program that's specifically directed towards the production of affordable housing. So this is particularly hard hit. It will make programs harder to use. So that's it for the CD program. I'll turn it over to the next speaker.

>> I'm now going to turn the phone over from Steve Berg from the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

>> Hi, everybody. Steve Berg from the National Alliance to End Homelessness. I want to speak briefly about the HUD homeless assistance program. People are familiar with homeless assistance at HUD. They're about 5% of the HUD budget and they're specifically focused on sheltering and moving people who are homeless into housing. It's established itself over the years as a performance based program that incentivized communities about solving the problem. It has established a success and a record that both Republicans and Democrats on the Hill have been willing and in fact happy to support.

So rather than starting within the Trump-- I want to start with what we need. We work on homelessness tend to be dissatisfied with the status quo which half a million people are still homeless on the streets every day. And another 100,000 every month become homeless. Keeping things the way they are is not good enough. And we're intending to advocate for increases in this program this year.

You can see the numbers on the slide where we just got fiscal 2017 was 2.383 billion. It would mean 40,000 additional homeless people housed. We need this budget to-- we need the bill that Congress ultimately passes to acknowledge the difficult work and excellent work people have done on homelessness. The Trump budget on the other hand goes the opposite direction.

As I said, we just received a increase for the 2017 budget. The Trump administration wants to take the increase away and roll us back to where we were before that. That cut would mean 25,000 fewer homeless people housed. In a context where we have all the people experiencing homelessness and more become homeless every time, we can't take cuts in this program. The Administration is talking about programs to be efficient and effective. We strongly believe and we think we have plenty of bipartisan support that these programs are that. The proposed cutting in many ways is-- we're urging Congress to do the right thing this year and get those as well as all the other important programs with HUD, moving in the right direction.

Great. Thank you so much, Steve. I will now move onto Sarah Mickelson who will talk about the national--

>> Great. I'll touch upon this. The President budget proposed to eliminate the HTF. It's a new funding mechanism that will use the housing trust fund would use but direct-- federal housing administration, I want you to know the housing trust fund works on new housing resource for many years. And exclusively targeted to people with lowest income. This is in the face of what the president's budget has-- direct resources that they're needed most. We argue this is one of the programs that do just that.

As you remember, the housing is funding outside of the appropriations process. Small fee on Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Last year it was funded at \$174 million. A small amount of money. But an important step in the right direction.

This would really hamper efforts to expand the housing trust fund through mechanisms. Infrastructure bill-- it also puts opportunity to expand at risk. We're not pleased with this and we'll be working to push back on this part of the bill. I want to talk briefly about USDA house rural housing. Despite rural housing put President Trump interest office, he did not clear their programs and those observe rural communities. It eliminates many of the homeownership programs, direct homeownership loans, self housing programs. It would eliminate loans and grants that build farm housing in many rural communities. It eliminates the rural housing preservation programs through section 515. And the multi--- this means that not on the does USDA not constructed any new rental housing since 2012. But it will continue to lose its existing portfolio because it doesn't have resources to rehabilitate and capitalize. It elimination housing repair loans. While the administration says that this is enough to maintain current rental systems contract, it's really unclear how they're getting to that number. On the one hand they have a new tool to help them better estimate rental assistance needs. On the other hand, they've been reluctant to share information about the number of properties that have left their portfolio. It's unclear if this decrease is caused by one versus the other.

I should note that these budget cuts come on top of a recent plan released by the administration to eliminate the undersecretary position for rural development. Many, many rural housing group see this a big demotion in terms of the priorities of this Administration and are looking to appropriators to prevent this from taking place by adding language to any appropriation bill.

>> Thanks, Sarah. Sarah, before we move onto the next section of our presentation, do we have any questions?

>> Great. Thank so much. One quick question we had was actually going back to the vouchers. It's about how the budget would affect portability of vouchers.

>> Well, you know, so if you cut funding for vouchers as dramatically as Administration is proceeded. Agencies have responded in several ways. Primary ways they stop releasing

vouchers under the depth of cuts that the administration is proposed we would expect to see a lot of number of termination in 2018. But agencies also do things by reducing the voucher subsidies in residents in various ways. When you do that, that increases I go significantly the amount of out-of-pocket rental cost that households must bear especially if they want to move with vouchers who neighborhoods where rents are somewhat higher. It could have a significant impact on the ability of families to move their, move using the vouchers they receive under funding cuts like this.

>> Great. Thanks so much Doug. We're going to get rolling with Elayne Weiss to share with us vase can I tips and opportunities, people like us really worried about these cuts, how they can dive in and get involved in their community and on the national level.

>> Thanks, Sarah. So as you all are aware, many people are very upset and angry about the Trump budget that's been put out. And we want to give you the best tips forgetting involved in pushing back against that budget.

But before we -- but I think it's important to note that we need to keep our eyes on the prize. While we're all angry about the Trump budget we need to look at fighting the spending caps for fiscal year 2018.

So right now conferences are going on in Congress about what are the funding levels for fiscal year 18. Will they try to do a budget deal? Lift the caps? It's still very unclear. Secretary Carson will be testifying on June 8 before the HUD committee in the house. So tune into that. But in the meantime, while these conferences are going on, what you could be doing is asking Congress to work together, to list spending caps for FY18, maintaining defense and non-defense programs, and make sure housing development programs receive the highest level of funding possible.

A phone call is great. An email is good as well. Tweeting, you know, that seems to have some impact as well. But we definitely encourage you to reach out to the member of Congress right now as much as possible. Sign onto our CHCDF letter. We sent it out a few months back. We had close to 3500 groups on it. We'd love to get more and send it again. If you have questions about that, in the email that goes out tomorrow, we will have those links. We have tweets lined up and emails and a script for you to use in your advocacy to make it easier for you.

Additionally we are working together with our members, national and state partners, mayors and other elected officials around planning a housing day of action. Our voices on July 29. On that day and throughout the week, leading up to the event, advocates across the country will hold activities calling for greater development. We're super excited about this. And we hope that you'd like to participate as well. If you are interested in participating in our day of action, please email us at our home@NLIHC.org. Your name, your organization, the point of contact. The activities you're interested in planning. What we're going to do we have a website that we're building out right now. And we will populate that website with more activities on it that will help promote your activities that you're planning. It will be a great way for people to see what you're doing in your community.

Some of the activities that you plan are-- a press conference, a-- a site visit, visit with your members of Congress and congressional staff. You can do a call in day or letter writing campaign. Really you can do any of these activities. You can do all hose activities if you want to. And if you have any other ideas for activity, let us know. We would love to get your feedback on different things that we can do to make this day of action better.

The way that we will help support your planning efforts for the day of action, we will provide

sample materials, talking points, tweets, op-ed, press release, letter inviting elected officials to your events, Social Media images

Posters can be printed out and of course we will assist in promoting your event so people in your community and beyond know the good work that you're doing there.

And here is a snapshot of the website that we are currently developing. It looks great. Like I said, we're excited for our day of action and we really, really hope that you will participate with us and really help us amplify our voices and make sure our elected officials know that not only are these unacceptable, but we need to be looking into further investments in housing and community development if we want people to thrive across the country.

So we've invited Gabriel from Community Voices Heard to talk about his experience in organizing these types of events. Gabriel is a grassroots organizer who has done a lot of work getting people to amplify their voice and helping people who might not be used to doing advocacy work to feel comfortable enough to do it. So Gabriel, we know there's a lot of energy and a desire to respond to the HUD budget cuts that are being proposed by the Trump administration. We're seeing a lot of people for the first time getting engaged in advocacy work. What's the best advice you can give to people to engage for the first time advocates.

>> Great, yes. Thanks. So yeah, to start, I would reiterate your advice that you gave around putting pressure on your federal representatives and all the means that you said and was add onto that list of contacting them what we call bird dogging which is finding out where they're making public appearances and challenge them on their substantial on these cuts and investment and housing.

and you know that's true across the aisle. We need to be putting pressure both on moderate Republicans as well as Democrats to be true champions of this fight. But ultimately, you know for individuals, your activism as individuals will be limited. So I think the biggest piece of advice I would have for individuals tuning in is to join organizations or in rare cases where there's no organizations that exist to start an organization.

And you know, you can do that by asking around but by also email that was put on the screen there, from the national low income housing coalition about what groups they're connected to in newer area. There are other organizations as well that you can Google and contact them. They have groups all over the country. You can contact --. and I would encourage folks to be thoughtful what you bring to the table. That's going to be different depending on who you are. If you're a person of means, grassroots organizations, give money. Think about what kind of public relationships you can leverage and bring to these fights. And plug in to these actions that are coming up in July.

What skills do you bring to the table? I would encourage one of the core tools of community organizing for many, many years, is what we call house meetings. And I would encourage pretty much everyone on this call, no matter who you are, to host a small meeting in your home, five to 15 people who you are connected with who you think have care about these issues one way or another. And have a simple conversation why that is and what could be done about it, how you can go into these national days of action coming up.

part of an organization, if you're part of an organization, I would say think about what resources you can bring to the table. Connect those to organizing efforts that already exist. And finally if in your city there is no groups taking leadership on this issue, I would press forward in creating a no cuts coalition. That's what our organization decided we had to do that we couldn't sit out this fight given our base in public housing in New York City as you saw through the members presented earlier, folks are already getting sick, in some case dying from the condition. That's

what those numbers mean in New York City.

These cuts impact so many groups of people. What we found here in New York City is a lot of folks are looking for that leadership. We're really willing to come out and mobilize because of how it would impact their constituency. Talk to your face lead ores, labor leader, grassroots, policy organizations and press for it.

>> Thanks so much for that Gabriel. How do you connect people who, with other advocates who don't know how to use the internet. It might not be their forte. We have members who we still mail them things. How do you connect those folks?

>> Yeah, I think there are a couple of ways to do that. You know, one is to build relationships with groups that are already organized. So that list of different kind of constituencies is a good place to start especially for actions in July. We don't have enough time to organize only person by person. So we need to build a relationship with a pastor who can bring in his whole church, right? You know, a tenant association, that can bring in their membership. Labor union, et cetera, et cetera. And again, I would ask around about which groups are really representing and doing real grassroots organizations and plug into those groups. And you know, ultimately don't be afraid at the end of the day to go knock of a door if this is an issue that you care about. Go to talk to folks greatly impacted and plug them into the work that's already happening.

>> All right. Another question I have is how do you make sure your events involve actions in talking to elected officials. It's one thing to go out and have a rally. But there has to be connection with our local official so we know what we're standing for and asking for.

>> Yeah, I appreciate that question. We need a lot of hour coming from the street. I think you've been disruptive in militant actions. But that needs to be paired with a real legislative strategy. And that we won't actually win this fight without having real champions at the federal level.

So I think, if you are part of an organization, you know, especially if you have a coalition in your area, you should meet with your electives, right? And they should become part your events that you're organizing. Play key roles. And you should talk to them about how they can plug in and what a federal strategy looks like for them. How they can actually move some of their colleagues on the national level.

>> And we know that there's that saying, a picture is worth a thousand words. You just had a big event up in New York. What type of visuals at events, is the best media response? I'm sure you had had plenty of visuals at your rally up in New York City a couple of weeks back. What do you tuned grab the headlines or make sure or ensure that you get the press to show up and cover your event?

>> My favorite sign that I saw at the actually organized in New York is cut your hair, not HUD. And I do think that, the use of humor is effective. People do like that. You know, very simple advice is you want to really make sure that the messages are read from far away. It's a mistake a lot of people make. You look at the photograph and you can't really see what's on there.

I'd also be really clear about what are your demands that come across and what is this core messaging that you want to be on those signs. But I think the humor more than anything will get spread around in terms of visuals.

>> I tend to agree. Final question, you've been giving a lot of great, you know, tips and best practices, but if you were to give your one tip for something--

>> I think that for many folks who are getting involved for the first time, there can be a

nervousness. There can be feeling of awkwardness, reaching out to do this work. But I would really just encourage folks not to stay in that place. Think about how much is at stake right now. And how this moment really demands that we take a little bit of risk even if it is uncomfortable. Don't stay inactive. Figure out one way or another how you can contribute to stopping these devastating cuts.

>> Thank you so much for that, Gabriel. We're going to take questions until the end of the hour. And at that time, I'll also put our contact information if you have any questions you can reach out to us directly. To Sarah, do we have any questions?

>> We do. This is again, Sarah. Genesis here on manning the questions. One question we had is about how housing authorities can engage their tenants and what are the limitations in doing this. I'm going to give this to Joey who is the head of our field team.

>> There aren't a lot of limitations in terms of housing authorities engaging their residents on the federal budget. They can engage residents from public house and also engage residents who use vouchers which is notable because so much of the engagement that happens in happens in public spaces, typically public bulletin boards, meeting rooms, notices on elevators and so forth. With the zone residents who use vouchers, one of the best ways to engage is mailing. That goes directly to voucher holder that's can include flyers and other information and so forth. Housing authorities aren't subject to, in terms of engagement, additional restrictions beyond what would be expected of most nonprofits in this regard.

>> Great. Thanks so much, Joey. People are certainly asking plenty of committees. Keep those questions coming in.

>> One question from Mary. She wants to know what is the process, obviously this budget itself won't be voted on. What is the process going forward? I know we've had this past year, but it took so long for a budget to get passed. Talk about the process and time line might look like.

>> Sure. So as I mentioned in the beginning, and unfortunately that was when we were having technical difficulties. The budget process this year has been delayed because of the different maneuvers that the current administration and Congress are using. The appropriations committees are delayed in doing their work because they get their top line spending number from the budget committee. They have a deadline that the budget committee as a deadline that they have to reach, May 15. After that appropriations committees move forward with their work which they're now finally starting to do. They're starting to hold hearings for the different subcommittees to figure out what their spending levels will be for FY18. We have been meeting with -- Congress, it sounds like right now the appropriations committee they're going to proceed with the FY18 spending caps that are required by the budget control act. Like I said, Ben Carson is going to testify on June 8. Hopefully we'll have a spending bill sometime shortly thereafter. Given the timeline of when they need to get these bills done which is the end of September, it's really tight. They're not going to be able to get all the bills done in enough time.

So they're likely going to have to rely on at least one stop gap standing measure until they come up with a deal.

>> We heard the house might try to move forward more quickly with their bill. But of course, at the end of the day, any appropriation bill is going to need 60 votes in the Senate. And that gives moderate Republicans and Democrats a lot of leverage in negotiating these bills. I suspect we'll have many opportunities to engage members of Congress whether it's on recess July 4 or August. And we'll be in touch with everyone soon, too, about other opportunities, for

now, the best opportunity for you is call the members of Congress. Put on your calendar July 29 for the day of action. With that, we will conclude the webinar. Thank you so much again for joining us. Again this webinar was recorded. If you missed something, don't worry, you'll be able to go back and watch the whole thing again.