

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

To Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

We, the undersigned organizations, write to strongly oppose the Trump administration's harmful proposal to slash federal housing benefits by imposing work requirements and rent increases that would leave even more low income people without a stable home and make it harder for them to climb the economic ladder and live with dignity. President Trump's proposal to impose work requirements and rent increases on housing benefits is at best counterproductive and at worst dangerous to the low income families who receive these benefits—the majority of whom have a disability or are seniors.

One of the biggest barriers to economic prosperity for America's lowest income families is the lack of decent, accessible, and affordable homes. Research shows that when people have a stable home that they can afford, they are better able to find employment, achieve economic mobility, age in place, perform better in school, and maintain improved health. Federal investments in affordable homes have helped millions of families move out of poverty, but because of chronic underfunding, four out of every five families in need of housing assistance are turned away. Families without housing benefits have no choice but to cut back on investments in their future, including education, training, retirement savings, and healthcare.

Cutting housing benefits by imposing work requirements and rent increases will not create the well-paying jobs and opportunities that are needed to lift these low income families out of poverty and help them achieve financial independence. Research shows that for most families, work requirements do not lead to stable employment or a path out of poverty. Instead, it will only cut people off from the very housing benefits and services that make it possible for them to find and maintain jobs. This is particularly the case for people with disabilities. And without housing assistance, low income people face a greater risk of eviction and homelessness – circumstances that make it incredibly difficult to maintain a job.

Because people receiving federal housing assistance already pay their fair share, rent increases will only force them to divert money away from basic needs like medicine or food and would put them at increased risk of eviction and homelessness. By law, families are required to pay what they can afford in rent, based on their income. Rent increases, such as higher minimum rents or cuts to utility payments, target the very poorest people, including seniors and people with disabilities, who are already at significant risk of homelessness.

Moreover, President Trump's proposals undermine public-private partnerships. By making it more expensive for the private sector to build, preserve, and maintain affordable rental homes, this proposal would discourage the private sector from playing its critical role in addressing the severe shortage of affordable rental homes that impacts every state and congressional district. Imposing work

requirements and rent increases creates new administrative costs for housing providers, without providing significant benefits to residents or the public. Housing providers will be forced to divert resources away from property maintenance and the employment-related resident services they already provide to pay for additional staff and regulatory compliance.

We strongly urge Congress to reject the Trump administration's harmful proposal to slash housing benefits by imposing work requirements and rent increases. Instead, Congress should enact proven solutions to help struggling families earn more and get ahead. This starts with expanding—not slashing—investments in affordable homes, job training, education, childcare, and other policies to help families thrive.

Sincerely,