



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

BILL NELSON
FLORIDA

February 8, 2018

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I urge you to include an unprecedented level of support for affordable housing in your Fiscal Year 2019 budget request. For too long, affordable housing has been treated like a luxury, rather than a basic need. This defies common sense. When renters can't afford to stay in their home, they're forced to choose between food, medicine, and a roof over their head. No one in America should have to make that kind of choice.

The less affordable housing gets, the more unstable our communities become. In fact, studies show unstable housing conditions lead to health risks, higher rates of crime, poor academic performance, psychological costs, and the loss of community. In other words, without a stable place to live, it's harder to find a job, keep a job, and raise a family.

Yet, according to the 2015 American Housing Survey, more than 74 percent of renters below the poverty line receive no housing assistance. Funding for housing assistance programs through the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Agriculture has fallen woefully behind the needs of the country—especially in Florida. Around 70 percent of low-income renters in the state pay more than 40 percent of their income to rent. On top of that, the growth of low-income renters in Florida has far outpaced the creation of new affordable housing units, according to a 2016 study by the University of Florida.

And now the state is experiencing an influx of people coming from Puerto Rico in the wake of Hurricane Maria, inflaming an already troubled affordable housing problem in Florida—a problem compounded by mistakes made at the state level. Over the years, the state government has siphoned money away from trust funds designed to increase the supply of affordable housing—using that that money instead for other purposes.

Without meaningful support for affordable housing at all levels of government, we risk condemning a whole lot of Americans to a life of distress and despair. That's why I respectfully ask that you put forth a budget that provides a significant increase in funding for federal housing programs.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Bill Nelson