

May 22, 2018

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Member, Committee of Commerce, Science, and Transportation
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

To Ranking Member Nelson:

We, the 213 undersigned organizations, write to express our support for the *Disaster Housing Assistance Act* to extend a longer-term housing solution, the Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP), to help the lowest income survivors displaced by the 2017 hurricanes and wildfires in Florida, Texas, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and California. Because of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) ongoing refusal to implement DHAP, families have resorted to doubling or tripling up with other low income families, returning to uninhabitable homes, or paying at least half of their income on rent, putting them at increased risk of evictions and, in worst cases, homelessness. We also write to urge you, as ranking member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and as a senator from a disaster-impacted state, to attach the *Disaster Housing Assistance Act* to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization bill before your committee to ensure that thousands of disaster survivors are able to afford to keep a roof over their heads and they work to rebuild their lives.

One of the top priorities after a disaster is making sure that all displaced families have a safe, accessible, and affordable place to live while they get back on their feet. History has shown us that DHAP is especially effective for individuals and families with the greatest needs – including low income seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, veterans, people experiencing homelessness, and others – after devastating disasters. By providing temporary rental assistance and wrap-around case management, DHAP helps the lowest income families find permanent housing solutions, secure employment, and connect to public benefits as they rebuild their lives and get back on their feet. DHAP has been used successfully after Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav, and Ike and Superstorm Sandy.

Today, more than four thousand families are still living in hotels through FEMA's Transitional Shelter Assistance (TSA), and thousands more were unable to access the hotels due to financial barriers. At the same time, state-run disaster housing programs face significant delays and have been unable to address the full scale of the housing needs. Despite the clear need, FEMA has not taken the steps necessary – including entering into an interagency agreement with HUD – to stand up the DHAP program in the nearly eight months since the first hurricane made landfall. In the past, these steps were taken as quickly as two weeks after a disaster. FEMA's continued refusal to allow DHAP is unacceptable and only makes it more difficult for survivors to get back on their feet.

The Disaster Housing Assistance Act directly addresses these challenges for survivors of the 2017 disasters. We urge you, however, to use this opportunity to permanently extend DHAP to eligible survivors of future disasters.

Moreover, we urge you to add basic safeguards and tools to help ensure that federal resources are being spent fairly and equitably to meet the needs of low income people and communities. This can be accomplished by requiring FEMA to collect and make public comprehensive demographic data on the impact of the disaster and how resources are allocated. Data should be collected on all protected classes and made public on a granular basis to enable meaningful

analysis. Access to this data is necessary to inform effective public participation in the development of state action plans and to ensure that the use of public funds is balanced among homeowners, renters, and people experiencing homelessness, as well as among housing, infrastructure, and mitigation projects targeted to the most affected areas and the lowest-income households. Making FEMA data public can also help identify gaps in services as well reforms needed for future disaster recoveries.

We again thank you for your introduction of the *Disaster Housing Assistance Act* and urge you, as ranking member of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, to address these pressing issues by adding your bill to the FAA reauthorization bill or other must-pass legislation.

Sincerely,

National Organizations (70)

American Baptist Home Mission Societies
Americans for Financial Reform
Boston Capital
Center for Community Change
Center for Popular Democracy
Children's Leadership Council
Coalition on Human Needs
Corporation for Supportive Housing
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Disaster Law Project
Elevate Energy
Enterprise Community Partners
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society
Grounded Solutions Network
Habitat for Humanity International
Hawkins Delafield and Wood
Hispanic Federation
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC
Homes for America
Housing Assistance Council
ICF International
Latino Commission on AIDS
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
LOCUS: Responsible Real Estate Developers and Investors
Low Income Investment Fund
Make Room
NAACP
National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations
National Association of Affordable Housing Lenders

National Center for Healthy Housing
National Church Residences
National Coalition for Latinxs with Disabilities
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Community Development Association
National Community Stabilization Trust
National Consumer Law Center
National Council on Independent Living
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Health Care for The Homeless Council
National Housing and Rehabilitation Association
National Housing Law Project
National Housing Resource Center
National Housing Trust
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
National League of Cities
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Stabilization Trust
National Urban League
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nixon Peabody
Oxfam America
Partnership for Inclusive Disasters
Pathstone Corporation
PolicyLink
Portlight Inclusive Disaster Strategies
Preservation of Affordable Housing
Prosperity Now
Refugees International
Smart Growth America
Stewards of Affordable Housing for The Future
Technical Assistance Collaborative
The Arc of the United States
The Schiff Group
UnidosUS
Universal Living Wage
US Vets Homeless Feeding N Housing Services
Voices for Civil Justice
Volunteers of America

State Organizations (143)

Fair Housing Center of Northern Alabama
180/2020

Alabama
California

Center for Sustainable Neighborhoods	California
Fair Housing Advocates of Northern California	California
Fair Housing Council of the San Fernando Valley	California
Greater Napa Valley Fair Housing Center	California
Housing California	California
PYATOK Architects	California
Sacramento Regional Coalition to End Homelessness	California
Western Center on Law and Poverty	California
ARTE Inc	Connecticut
Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leaders	Connecticut
Center for Latino Progress - CPRF	Connecticut
Connecticut Housing Coalition	Connecticut
Greater Hartford Legal Aid	Connecticut
Hispanic Federation - Connecticut	Connecticut
Hispanic Health Council	Connecticut
Latino Community Services, Inc.	Connecticut
Spanish Community of Wallingford	Connecticut
CRP	DC
Affordable Homeownership Foundation	Florida
Alachua Habitat for Humanity	Florida
Catalyst Miami	Florida
City of Pompano Beach	Florida
Community Justice Project	Florida
De Hostos Senior Center	Florida
Fair Housing Center of the Greater Palm Beaches	Florida
Family Matters of Flagler	Florida
First Community Christian Pentecostal Church of God	Florida
Florida Alliance for Assistance Services and Technology	Florida
Florida Alliance of Community Development Corporations	Florida
Florida Housing Coalition	Florida
Florida Legal Services	Florida
Florida Supportive Housing Coalition	Florida
Habitat for Humanity Florida	Florida
Hispanic Federation - Florida	Florida
Housing Leadership Council	Florida
Metro North Community Development Corporation	Florida
Miami Homes for All	Florida
New Florida Majority	Florida
Organize Florida	Florida
Personal Growth Center	Florida
Refuge Ministries of Tampa Bay/International	Florida
Samuel's House	Florida
Solar Habitats, LLC.	Florida
The Hendrickson Company	Florida

United Way of Florida	Florida
Youth and Family Alternatives	Florida
Fuller Center for Housing	Georgia
Georgia Advancing Communities Together, Inc.	Georgia
KFB Business Consultants	Georgia
Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless	Georgia
Our Fine Arts These	Georgia
Intermountain Fair Housing Council	Idaho
Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana	Indiana
Alembic Community Development	Louisiana
Cenla Community Action Committee	Louisiana
Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance	Louisiana
Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability Initiative	Louisiana
Louisiana Budget Project	Louisiana
Mental Health America of Louisiana	Louisiana
MQVN Community Development Corporation	Louisiana
Sapience Strategies	Louisiana
Advocacy and Training Center	Maryland
Autism Women's Network	Maryland
Baltimore Neighborhoods	Maryland
Montgomery County Housing Opportunity Council	Maryland
Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies	Maryland
Violence Intervention program	Maryland
Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations	Massachusetts
Building Families First Community Organization	Michigan
Integrated Community Solutions	Minnesota
Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing	Minnesota
Our Spring Lake Store	Minnesota
Community LINC	Missouri
Habitat for Humanity Northern Ocean	New Jersey
Housing Community Development Network of New Jersey	New Jersey
Manufactured Home Owners Association of New Jersey	New Jersey
Monarch Housing Associate	New Jersey
Arbor Housing and Development	New York
BOOM!Health	New York
Care for the Homeless	New York
Center for New York City Neighborhoods	New York
Community League of the Heights	New York
Fordham Bedford Housing Corporation	New York
HANAC, Inc.	New York
Morningside Heights Multi-Cultural Tenants Organization	New York
Neighborhood Preservation Coalition of New York State	New York
New York Democratic County Committee	New York

New York Housing Conference	New York
New York State Tenants and Neighbors Coalition	New York
Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance	New York
Northern Regional Center for Independent Living	New York
New York Council on Adoptable Children	New York
Pathstone Corporation	New York
Rebuilding Together New York City	New York
Repertorio Español	New York
Rochester/Monroe County Homeless Continuum of Care, Inc.	New York
North Carolina Housing Coalition	North Carolina
DeBruler, Inc.	Oklahoma
Baker Schonchin Holdings Corporation	Oregon
Liberty Resource	Pennsylvania
Nazareth Housing Services	Pennsylvania
Bill's Kitchen	Puerto Rico
Casa La Providencia	Puerto Rico
Coalición de Coaliciones	Puerto Rico
Fundacion CAF	Puerto Rico
Hispanic Federation - Puerto Rico	Puerto Rico
Instituto Especial para el Desarrollo Integral del Individuo, la Familia y la Comunidad, Inc.	Puerto Rico
MAVI-NEADA	Puerto Rico
PathStone Community Development Corporation of Puerto Rico	Puerto Rico
HousingWorks Rhode Island	Rhode Island
Habitat for Humanity Abbeville/McCormick Counties	South Carolina
Habitat for Humanity of Kershaw County	South Carolina
South Carolina Association of Habitat Affiliates	South Carolina
The Fifteenth Avenue Baptist Community Development Corp.	Tennessee
Cambridge Development Group	Texas
Center for Public Policy Priorities	Texas
Coalition for The Homeless of Houston/Harris County	Texas
Family Restoration and Economic Empowerment	Texas
House the Homeless	Texas
Houston Center for Independent Living	Texas
Houston Housing Authority	Texas
Inclusive Communities Project	Texas
Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Houston	Texas
Local Initiatives Support Corporation, San Antonio	Texas
New Hope Housing	Texas
Texas Appleseed	Texas
Texas Association of Community Development Corporations	Texas
Texas Homeless Network	Texas
Texas Housers	Texas
Texas Tenants' Union	Texas

True Casa Consulting
Valley AIDS Council
Family Promise
Brattleboro Area Affordable Housing
Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition
Habitat for Humanity Virginia
Prosperity Housing
SP Group LLC
Greenfield Institute
Whatcom Skagit Housing
Wyoming Coalition for the Homeless

Texas
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Vermont
Virginia
Virginia
Virginia
Washington
Washington
Wyoming