

April XX, 2018

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation,  
Housing, and Urban Development  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation,  
Housing, and Urban Development  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Collins and Ranking Member Reed,

As you develop the Fiscal Year 2019 Transportation and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you provide \$2.8 billion for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants and \$22.8 billion for Tenant-Based “Section 8” Rental Assistance. Strong support for these two vital programs is critical to maintaining the progress already made by proven solutions, and continuing the bipartisan effort to fight homelessness across the country.

Communities around the country have made significant progress toward ending veteran and chronic homelessness—and in decreasing family homelessness—largely due to funding that Congress has made available through McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants and Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers. McKinney-funded rapid re-housing has also proven to be an effective intervention to get youth off the streets and on the road to self-sufficiency.

However, there is still much work to be done. The 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress found that on any given night, over 553,742 people were homeless in America. Over 184,000 of those were in families, including children, and over 40,000 were unaccompanied homeless youth. When children and youth experience homelessness they are at greater risk for mental and physical health issues, and may experience long-term academic challenges. Families experiencing homelessness struggle to maintain employment, and those fighting health, mental health, and addiction issues lack the housing stability needed to adequately address their problems.

We urge the committee to provide \$2.8 billion to McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants in FY2019. This would allow HUD to fund effective rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing, and other crisis response programs to the capacities needed to build on demonstrated progress toward ending homelessness. This would bring us closer to ending homelessness for families, unaccompanied youth, and individuals.

Providing \$22.8 billion for Section 8 TBRA, including \$20.6 billion to renew all current vouchers and \$1.9 billion for administrative fees, would ensure that every single voucher

currently in circulation will be renewed for FY2019 and the program continues to function. The request also includes \$110 million for 12,000 new housing vouchers to reduce homelessness and help families at risk of having their children placed into foster care due to a lack of affordable housing. Assisted households' have an average income of just \$14,500, well below the federal poverty line; and nearly all of them include the elderly, people with disabilities, or children. Research shows that housing vouchers reduce poverty, homelessness, and other hardships, and can provide a platform for low-income children to improve their lives over the long term.

We strongly urge the subcommittee to provide robust funding for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants and for Section 8 TBRA to help ensure that every American has a safe, stable place to call home. Thank you for considering this important request and for your continuing leadership in helping to prevent and end homelessness in the United States.

Sincerely,

---

Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator

---

Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator