



NEW ENGLAND HOUSING NETWORK

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

Dear Senator Reed:

On behalf of the New England Housing Network, I want to thank you for your steadfast dedication to the creation, production, and preservation of affordable housing. According to the latest "Out of Reach" report from the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the average worker getting paid the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour would need to work 85 hours a week to afford a one bedroom apartment. For every 100 extremely low income rental households in the U.S., there are only 31 units affordable and available. Clearly, there is a mismatch across our country in terms of what people are getting paid and their ability to find a decent place for themselves and their families to live.

I write to you now because the House budget contains a grave threat to our ability to produce more rental housing for very low-income people, and we hope that you do not include this provision in the Senate housing budget. The House has approved taking the money that is supposed to go into the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF) (which has never actually been funded since its creation) and putting this money into the HOME program instead. While we agree the HOME program is a worthy investment (and remain terribly distressed at how much has been cut out of this program over the past few years), it does not serve the same purpose as the NHTF. HOME provides support for housing for a range of low-income housing, but the NHTF is focused specifically on expanding the supply of rental housing for extremely low income households.

Not only would the House budget divert the NHTF money into HOME, it would also prohibit any funds from any source going into the NHTF at all. In essence, the House budget would wipe out everything we have worked so hard to create as part of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 (HERA), which was enacted with strong bipartisan support. Our country needs 7.1 million more affordable rental units to meet the needs of our extremely low income families, and the NHTF is key to getting some of these units built and housing families.

Thank you for your attention to this, and for your help in making sure that the Senate does not adopt the House provisions in this area.

Sincerely,


Brenda Clement

Executive Director, Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA)
on behalf of the New England Housing Network

THANKS SO MUCH FOR BEING SUCH A STRONG
LEADER ON THIS ISSUE. AS A RI RESIDENT
& NATIVE, I KNOW
HOW MUCH NEEDED THESE
RESOURCES ARE.