



March 18, 2024

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban
Affairs
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Tim Scott
Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban
Affairs
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Chairman Brown and Ranking Member Scott:

We write to urge you to include the *Eviction Crisis Act* and the *Family Stability and Opportunity Vouchers Act* in any bipartisan housing packages that moves forward in the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee. Both these bipartisan bills are top priorities for the [Opportunity Starts at Home](#) (OSAH) campaign and would each represent major steps forward in tackling the nation's housing crisis.

Through the unprecedented OSAH campaign, leading national organizations from many sectors have come together to advocate for more robust and equitable federal housing policies. Our vision is that the nation's historically marginalized households and those with the lowest incomes live in safe, accessible, affordable homes in neighborhoods that are free from discrimination and where everyone has equitable opportunities to thrive. The OSAH campaign, which is chaired by the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), is advised by a [Steering Committee](#) of 19 top national organizations.

Among various other promising provisions, the [Eviction Crisis Act](#), introduced in the 117th Congress by Senators Michael Bennet (D-CO), Rob Portman (R-OH), and Brown, would create ongoing funding for proven interventions to help low-income households facing housing instability due to an unexpected economic shock. By providing emergency rental assistance and housing stability services, the bill will help stabilize households before they face housing instability and homelessness, which often require more prolonged, extensive, and expensive housing assistance. It builds on the tremendous successes and lessons learned from the more than 500 ERA programs created during the pandemic that helped millions of households avoid eviction and homelessness. Most families in poverty who rent spend at least half of their incomes on housing, leaving virtually no margin for an unexpected expense. Broken-down cars, unreimbursed medical bills, or temporary declines of income can quickly send marginalized households down the spiral of housing instability, eviction, and even homelessness. If enacted, the Eviction Crisis Act would create a critical tool to help low-income households that live on the edge of what they can afford, and save taxpayer money in the process.

The [Family Stability and Opportunity Vouchers Act](#), reintroduced by Senators Van Hollen and Young would help 250,000 families with young children afford homes in communities of their choice. The bill provides 250,000 housing vouchers, paired with mobility counseling, to help low-income families with young children under the age of 6 access communities of their choice, including well-resourced neighborhoods with high-performing schools, strong job prospects, and other resources. The legislation prioritizes these new vouchers for households with a recent history of homelessness or housing instability or that live in an area of concentrated poverty (or are at risk of being displaced from an opportunity area). Research shows that when children in families with low incomes grow up in neighborhoods with low poverty, quality schools, and low crime, they are significantly more likely to attend college and more likely to



earn dramatically more as adults over the course of their lifetimes. Research also shows that low-income students perform better academically and close achievement gaps faster when housing assistance enables them to live stably in opportunity neighborhoods with lower-poverty schools. This helps break cycles of generational poverty and produces a positive taxpayer return.

Top national organizations from a variety of sectors, including health, education, civil rights, food security, environmental protection, faith, municipal governance, child welfare, criminal justice, anti-poverty, and more, have come together through the *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign to jointly push for these pieces of legislation. Despite their various issue areas, all these organizations understand that achieving their own goals depend on whether people have access to stable, affordable homes.

The *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign is eager and ready to work with you on enacting these proven solutions. Thank you for taking the time to consider this request.

Sincerely,

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| Camden Coalition | National Community Action Partnership |
| Children's Defense Fund | National Health Care of the Homeless Council |
| Children's HealthWatch | National Low Income Housing Coalition |
| Church World Service | National League of Cities |
| Coalition on Human Needs | National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund |
| Community Stability Project | National Network to End Domestic Violence |
| EMPath (Economic Mobility Pathways) | National Nurse-Led Care Consortium |
| Family Promise | National Women's Law Center |
| Food Research & Action Center | Natural Resources Defense Council |
| Healthcare Anchor Network | NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice |
| Justice in Aging | Pennsylvania Public Health Association |
| Mobility Works | Southern Poverty Law Center Action Fund |
| National Alliance to End Homelessness | ZERO TO THREE |
| National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) | |