

April XX, 2019

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
and Urban Development, and Related  
Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Chair Collins and Ranking Member Reed:

As you consider the Fiscal Year 2020 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we urge you to support the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Section 202 and 811 programs for seniors and persons with disabilities. We respectfully request: full funding for contract renewals and robust funding for capital advance and project based rental assistance awards for the Section 202 Housing for the Elderly program; and \$313 million for the Section 811 Housing for Persons with Disabilities program, to include \$83 million for project rental assistance awards. Section 202 and 811 funding supports the development of new housing and the continuation of rental assistance for very low-income seniors and persons with disabilities.

Section 202 provides a sensible and necessary approach to meeting our nation's growing affordable housing needs for seniors. As HUD's most recent *Worst Case Housing Needs Report* finds, 1.39 million very low-income elderly households are paying more than 50 percent of their income in rent. Moreover, according to the Bipartisan Policy Center's *Healthy Aging Begins at Home* report, the number of Americans aged 65 and older is expected to more than double by 2030 and Americans over the age of 85 make up the fastest-growing age group in the United States.

By leveraging other funding sources, combining affordable housing with access to supportive services, and focusing on the most vulnerable segments of the population, the Section 202 program helps more seniors to live independently and age in place. To date, Section 202 has helped produce nearly 400,000 homes for low-income seniors. We believe that continued investment in low-income affordable housing for the elderly is both cost-effective and critical to ensuring seniors can live in supportive, decent, and affordable housing.

HUD's Section 811 Housing for Persons with Disabilities program targets vulnerable persons with disabilities who need affordable housing in order to effectively access community-based support and services. Without Section 811 housing, HUD reports that many of those served by the program would be forced to live in an institution, with aging parents, in a homeless shelter, or on the streets. According to HUD's *Worst Case Housing Needs Report*, about one in seven renters with "worst case" housing needs – meaning they had incomes below half of the median in their area and paid more than half their monthly incomes in rent, lived in severely

substandard conditions, or both – included a nonelderly person with disabilities. This funding level will allow the Department to renew all current rental assistance as well as fund new project rental assistance awards supporting affordable units for persons with disabilities.

Federal investments in affordable housing for the nation's most vulnerable holds promise for significantly reducing Medicaid and Medicare costs while also providing low-income elderly the opportunity to age in place and persons with disabilities the opportunity to live in the most integrated setting possible.

As Congress makes difficult decisions about our nation's budget, we encourage you to continue bipartisan support of protecting our most needy and vulnerable populations. We thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,