



www.nlihc.org
*Dedicated solely to achieving socially just public policy that assures
with the lowest incomes in the United States have affordable and decent homes*
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December 8, 2017

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling
Financial Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Financial Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Maxine Waters
Financial Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Emmanuel Cleaver
Financial Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

To Chairman Hensarling, Ranking Member Waters, Chairman Duffy, and Ranking Member Cleaver:

On behalf of the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), I write to express strong concerns about H.R. 4560, which was introduced by Congressman French Hill (R-AR) and is slated for a vote in the House Financial Services Committee next week. If enacted, this bill would suspend funding to the national Housing Trust Fund, a program that helps America's lowest income seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, and veterans afford to keep a roof over their heads, until Congress passes legislation to reform the housing finance system. Enacting legislation that uses critically needed housing resources for struggling families as a bargaining chip is a step in the wrong direction and undermines the bipartisanship that will be needed to achieve our shared goal of housing finance reform. For that reason, I urge you to ensure that any bill brought before the committee for a vote does not hold hostage funding for the Housing Trust Fund.

NLIHC is dedicated solely to ensuring that people with the lowest incomes in the United States have affordable and decent homes. Our members include state and local housing coalitions, nonprofit housing providers, homeless service providers, fair housing organizations, researchers, public housing agencies, private developers and property owners, local and state government agencies, faith-based organizations, residents of public and assisted housing, and concerned citizens working with and on behalf of extremely low income households who receive or are in need of housing assistance.

Nationally, there is a shortage of 7.4 million rental homes affordable and available to families with extremely low incomes. For every 100 of the lowest income people, there are just 35 affordable homes available to them. Due to chronic underfunding of critical

affordable rental housing programs, just one in four low income households in need receives any housing assistance. The rest either live on the cusp of homelessness – most (71%) paying more than half of their limited income on rent – or they are one of the hundreds of thousands of people who have no homes at all. These families are forced to make impossible trade-offs between paying rent and buying groceries, seeing a doctor, paying for medications, or saving for a rainy day.

The national Housing Trust Fund is the first federal housing resource that is exclusively targeted to help build and preserve rental homes that are affordable to people with the lowest incomes, and it is one that was specifically designed to address the housing needs of people most severely impacted by the rental housing crisis. It is *the most targeted* federal housing production program. Because the program is administered as a block grant, each state has the flexibility to decide how to best use these resources to address its most pressing housing needs.

In 2017, \$220 million in Housing Trust Fund dollars were allocated to states. Most states have chosen to use their Housing Trust Fund investment to build and preserve affordable rental homes for extremely low income veterans, seniors, people with disabilities or special needs, and people experiencing homelessness. For example, Texas is slated to prioritize its Housing Trust Fund dollars to build affordable rental homes in areas of opportunity located in lower poverty communities near public transportation, grocery stores, libraries, and health facilities. Wisconsin will build affordable homes to address homelessness and homes for veterans.

While currently funded at only a modest amount, the Housing Trust Fund is a critical resource, and we remain strongly committed to working with Congress to expand the Housing Trust Fund through housing finance reform and other legislative avenues. Passage of H.R. 4560, however, would hold hostage funding for the Housing Trust Fund until investors in Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac receive dividend payments. This can only occur when Congress enacts legislation to reform Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which have in government conservatorship for nearly a decade. While we agree that housing finance reform is long overdue, withholding vital resources that serve America's poorest families, at a time when our country is experiencing a severe shortage of affordable rental housing for people with the greatest needs, is unnecessary, cruel and counter-productive.

Sincerely,



Diane Yentel
President and CEO
National Low Income Housing Coalition