

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 18, 2016

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 2017 Transportation and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you provide \$2.664 billion to McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants, as modernized by the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009, and \$20.854 billion to Section 8 Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA). Strong support for these two vital programs would enable communities to end chronic homelessness and put a down payment on ending homelessness among families with children.

Communities around the country have made significant progress toward ending homelessness among veterans and chronic homelessness, largely due to funding that Congress has made available through McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants for chronic homelessness and Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers for veterans.


However, there is still much work to be done. The 2015 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress found that on any given night, over 564,000 people were homeless in America. Over 206,000 of those were in families, including over 122,000 children. When children experience homelessness they are at greater risk for mental and physical health issues, and may experience long-term academic challenges. Further, Congress has repeatedly pushed back the deadline for ending chronic homelessness.

We urge the committee to provide \$2.664 billion to McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants in FY2017. This would finish the job of ending chronic homelessness by funding an additional 25,500 new units of supportive housing. It would also make progress on ending family homelessness by funding an additional 8,000 units of rapid re-housing. Finally, it would expand initiatives that were included in the FY2016 enacted bill, thanks to the hard work and leadership of your Subcommittee, to test innovative projects to find out what interventions work best for ending youth homelessness.

Providing \$20.854 billion for Section 8 TBRA would continue assistance for all families currently using the program, and provide 10,000 additional vouchers to homeless families and children. Additionally, this funding would benefit veterans through the HUD-VASH program, which has demonstrated the effectiveness of targeted vouchers at helping communities end homelessness.

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



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



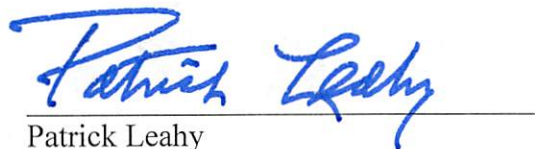
Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



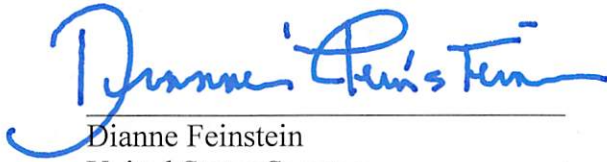
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Mazie Hirono
United States Senator



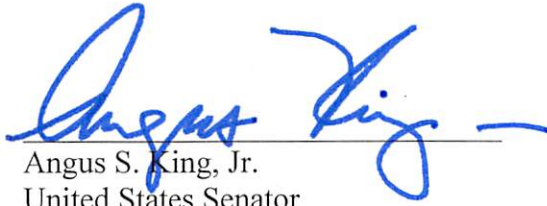
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



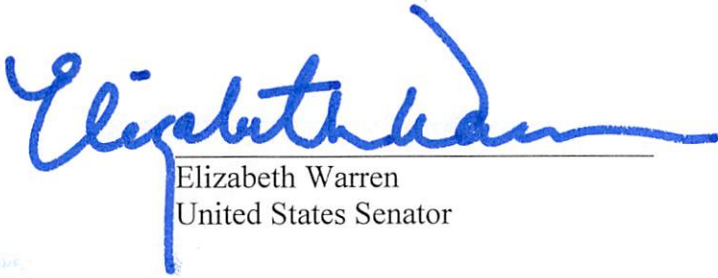
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



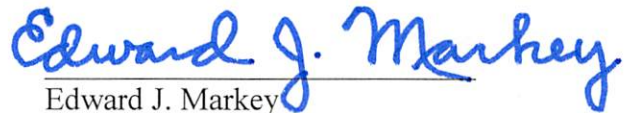
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



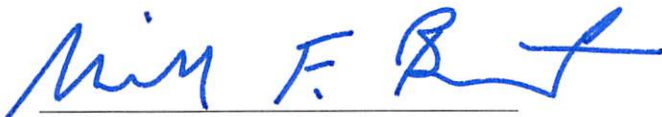
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator




Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



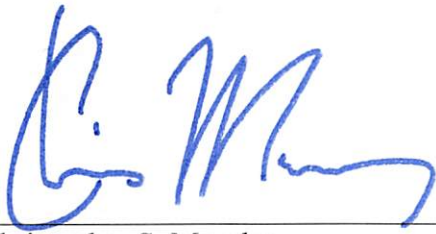
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



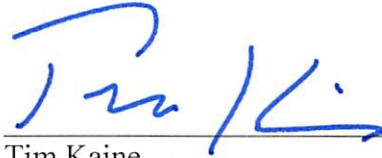
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



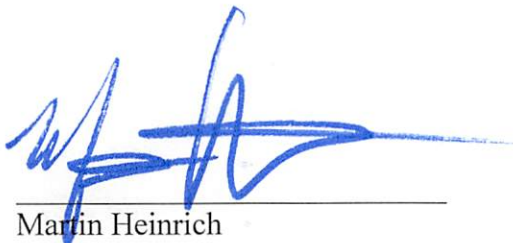
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator