

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

January 10, 2020

Dr. Robert G. Marbut, Jr.  
Executive Director  
U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness  
301 7<sup>th</sup> St. S.W.  
Washington, DC 20407

Dear Director Marbut:

As you begin your tenure as Executive Director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), we look forward to working with you and write to underscore our shared commitment to furthering effective, proven strategies to address homelessness by prioritizing humane and data-driven interventions.

As the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Senate and House Subcommittees responsible for allocating Federal funds to HUD's homeless assistance programs, as well as the USICH, we have consistently worked on a bipartisan basis to ensure communities and service providers receiving Federal funding follow evidence-based practices to alleviate and end homelessness. As you enter your role as Executive Director of USICH, we encourage you to continue the commitment to evidence-based, non-punitive strategies and practices.

Housing First is an approach that has received bipartisan support over the past decade, and members from both sides of the aisle can attest to the reduction of homelessness in their communities through the application of this approach. The Housing First strategy is especially effective for youth, young adults, and individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in accessing services provided through their local Continuums of Care (CoCs), and has been shown to result in improved medical and behavioral health, reduced criminal justice involvement, lower rates of substance use, and better educational outcomes.

Within the framework of Housing First, permanent supportive housing has demonstrated its effectiveness for most homeless subpopulations, although the flexibility to use transitional housing or rapid-rehousing models is also important. While these models have different approaches, when effectively deployed, they share the end goal of bringing vulnerable individuals and families to safe and stable housing as quickly as possible without creating unnecessary steps or barriers to housing and services, and without using housing as a reward for behavior modification. To reach this goal, it is important that CoCs have the flexibility to design a coordinated entry system that fits the needs of their population in accordance with the community's unique needs, and this flexibility should be based on the inclusion and prioritization of evidence-based and effective methods.

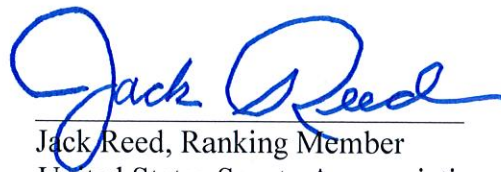
Through USICH's collaborative work with local, state, and Federal government entities, non-profit agencies, and other partners, our nation has seen success at reducing homelessness since 2010, including: a 50 percent reduction in veteran homelessness; a 16 percent reduction in chronic homelessness; and a 29 percent decline in homelessness among families with children, with unsheltered homelessness in this subpopulation plummeting by 72 percent. Adhering to data-driven methods as a criteria for receiving Federal funding has allowed CoCs to effectively transform the lives of veterans, children, and families, and resulted in these drastic percentage reductions.

USICH has served as a driving force in public-private partnerships in the work to end homelessness, and we look forward to continued collaboration with the agency under your leadership. We encourage you to reach across Federal agencies to downstream efforts to prevent people exiting other Federal or state programs or services from experiencing homelessness in the first place – particularly for youth exiting the foster care system, veterans re-entering civilian life, and persons in recovery from mental health disorders. Further, we urge USICH to remain committed to evidence-based methods as they provide the necessary tools, research, analyses, and strategies to communities seeking to end homelessness across the nation.

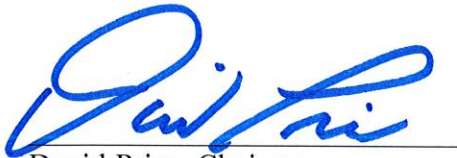
Sincerely,



Susan Collins, Chairman  
United States Senate Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
and Urban Development, and Related Agencies



Jack Reed, Ranking Member  
United States Senate Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
and Urban Development, and Related Agencies



David Price, Chairman  
United States House Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
and Urban Development, and Related Agencies



Mario Diaz-Balart, Ranking Member  
United States House Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
and Urban Development, and Related Agencies