



March 30, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cochran, Chairman Frelinghuysen, Vice Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Lowey:

The Council of Large Public Housing Authorities (CLPHA), the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) and the Public Housing Authorities Directors Association (PHADA) are submitting the following joint letter to express our support for certain funding levels in your respective FY17 THUD appropriations bills for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) public housing and related programs.

While these FY17 THUD appropriations bills do not provide the funding to meet the full eligibility or need of the HUD affordable housing programs, we strongly urge Congress to produce a full appropriations funding bill that reflects the critical and hard work of the committees while rejecting the continuing resolution (CR) approach for the rest of the year. A CR at FY16 levels will not meet the needs for FY17.

For many families, the public housing and housing voucher programs are the gateway to housing stability, self-sufficiency, and economic independence. To accomplish these objectives, housing authorities are developing transformational partnerships with important and committed stakeholders to benefit children, seniors, persons with disabilities, veterans and homeless persons.

For many housing authorities, this means coordinating with the education, workforce development, health care, transportation, and social services systems at the local level to provide supports and opportunities to residents. However, over the years, public housing has suffered devastating cuts to its programs, placing these very same innovations and transformational partnerships serving low-income residents at risk.

We know the funding decisions recommended by your respective committees were made in a difficult, constricted funding environment, and we appreciate the work of you and your staff in attempting to balance competing demands and budgetary objectives. The recent reports of the White House proposal to cut \$18 billion from non-defense programs in the FY17 spending bill, including a \$1.7 billion cut to HUD, to offset increases to defense spending and to start to build a wall along the Mexican border, would only hinder efforts to enact final FY17 spending bills.

Among other cuts, the proposal would zero out HUD's Choice Neighborhoods grants and cut the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in half. We strongly urge you to reject the White House request.

In light of these budget realities, and acceding to the funding levels and proposals reflected in your respective versions of the FY17 THUD funding bills, we therefore recommend:

- \$4.675 billion for the Public Housing Operating Fund;
- \$1.925 billion for the Public Housing Capital Fund;
- Include Senate report language requesting a HUD report on Public Housing Mortgage Program under Section 30;
- \$4 million for the Rental Assistance Demonstration, and raise the unit cap to 250,000;
- \$18.355 billion for Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Tenant-Based Voucher Renewals;
- \$1.769 billion for HCV Administrative Fees;
- \$100 million for Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, with not less than \$50 million dedicated to public housing authorities as the lead applicant;
- \$50 million for HUD-VASH vouchers;
- \$35 million for the ROSS program;
- \$21.5 million for Emergency Capital Needs;
- \$75 million for the Family Self Sufficiency Program;
- \$110 million for Tenant Protection Vouchers;
- \$15 million for the Jobs Plus Initiative;
- \$10.901 billion for Project-Based Rental Assistance;
- \$2.487 billion for Homeless Assistance Grants;
- \$11 million for a HCV Mobility Demonstration program;
- \$20 million for the Family Unification Program

Both House and Senate Appropriations Committee reports accompanying each FY 2017 THUD bill, contain directives to HUD to address important public policy and administration issues. Both committees' reports demonstrate a responsiveness to helping solve problems by directing HUD to take action in a number areas. Such topics include but are not limited to: small PHA deregulation, Fair Market Rent improvements, the Public Housing Mortgage Program under Section 30, Physical Needs Assessment relief and other important matters.

To help advance these and other issues, we believe that it is important for conference committee report language or a Joint Explanatory Statement, accompany a final appropriations bill rather than a CR.

Thank you for your consideration of our recommendations, and we look forward to supporting your work on these issues as the FY17 THUD funding bill works its way through the legislative process.

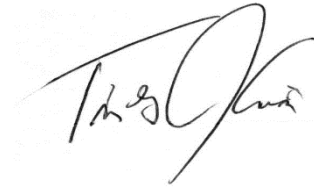
Sincerely,



Sunia Zatterman
Executive Director
CLPHA



John F. Bohm
Acting CEO
NAHRO



Timothy G. Kaiser
Executive Director
PHADA

cc: The Honorable Susan Collins
The Honorable Jack Reed
The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
The Honorable David Price