

August 15, 2003

The Honorable Mel Martinez
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 Seventh Street SW
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Secretary Martinez,

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to seek your commitment to ensure the Section 8 voucher program is sufficiently funded to renew all existing commitments in Fiscal Year 2004 and to permit housing agencies to lease their authorized level of vouchers in Fiscal Year 2004.

Our members represent owners and landlords who accept Section 8 vouchers. We support this important program, and everyday we see the positive difference it makes in the lives of our tenants.

As you are aware, questions have been raised about the adequacy of funding for the Section 8 voucher program. We are extremely concerned about the conclusions reached by Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) analyses which suggest the Section 8 voucher program would be underfunded by the Department's budget request and the Fiscal Year 2004 VA-HUD appropriations bill recently approved by the House of Representatives (HR 2861). If these analyses are correct, vouchers currently in use by 184,000 families could be jeopardized under the budget request, and an estimated 63,000 vouchers currently in use may be cut under the House funding level. We are very concerned by these analyses, because they suggest thousands of low-income families could lose their housing assistance due to inadvertent miscalculations.

We understand that HUD does not agree with CBPP's conclusions. Therefore, we strongly urge the Department to work closely with the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to ensure that the funding levels are sufficient to permit housing agencies to lease their authorized level of vouchers, thereby avoiding a reduction in this scarce housing resource.

We respectfully seek your commitment to fully funding the Section 8 voucher program.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging
Council for Affordable and Rural Housing
Institute for Real Estate Management
National Affordable Housing Management Association
National Apartment Association
National Association of Home Builders
National Leased Housing Association
National Multi Housing Council