

**From:** Larry Keys  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 30, 2020 7:29 PM  
**To:** Larry Keys  
**Cc:** Michal Machnowski  
**Subject:** NAHMA Grassroots Alert: Please Contact Senators To Advocate for Additional Financial Relief for Renters Impacted by COVID-19

**Importance:** High



Dear NAHMA Members,

As the Senate continues negotiations for the next Covid-19 relief package, many Americans still continue to suffer from a loss of income as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, including current residents, property staff and management personnel. The Senate is currently considering providing additional relief needed to address the urgent health and economic needs in our communities. We urge you to contact your Senators and request that adequate relief be provided, including fully funding all rental assistance and vital affordable housing programs. The Senate must meet the need for robust assistance as they consider additional economic stimulus packages.

**As the Congress continues to deliberate additional funding and assistance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, please:**

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- 1. Ask your Senators to Fully Fund Rental Assistance and Housing Programs to Offset Tenant Loss of Income and Increased Operating Costs from the COVID-19 Pandemic:** The Senate should provide full financial support for both HUD and USDA's Rural Housing Service (RHS) rental assistance programs to ensure that sufficient funds are available for tenants to meet their housing and utility obligations, helping to alleviate financial hardships that result from economic displacement or job-loss due to COVID-19. Additional assistance for rural programs, under USDA's Rural Housing Service, were not included in the CARES Act. In addition, recent Senate proposals do not provide additional funding for Project-Based Rental Assistance programs or additional funding for operational costs incurred to maintain properties in decent, safe, and sanitary conditions.

**TELL SENATORS: Fully fund HUD and USDA-RHS Rental Assistance Programs to offset the loss of tenant contributions and increased operating costs due to COVID19:**

- Increase existing HUD funding for Project-based Rental Assistance; Section 202 Program; and Section 811 Program, to cover increased operating costs for staffing, Personal Protective Equipment(PPE), security, and resident services and other resources related to COVID-19;**
  - Increase Rural Rental Assistance under USDA Rural Housing Service's Section 521 program to provide sufficient project based rental assistance to offset the tenant's loss of income and prevent displacement. The Section 521 program that can also be used to assist those rural renters who do not currently receive rental assistance.**
- 2. Urge Senators To Provide Additional Unemployment Benefits and Emergency Rental Assistance:** As the Senate deliberates how best to respond, please urge your Senators to include an emergency rental assistance and extend

unemployment benefits to help families and individuals who are currently unassisted by federal programs and struggling to afford rent and utilities because of a pay cut or job loss associated with COVID-19. The Senate worked together to provide significant economic relief to affected Americans as part of the CARES Act. While the steps taken were significant, more assistance for renters is now needed. With an economic recovery still a long way off, providing additional direct and sustained economic assistance to renters and their families will be necessary to ensure they are able to meet their financial obligations in the months ahead.

**TELL SENATORS: Support and Enact Cross-Cutting Emergency Rental Assistance to help struggling families and extend unemployment benefits, including:**

- *Expediting the delivery of funding by utilizing the capacity and expertise of private housing providers, public housing agencies (PHAs), housing finance agencies (HFAs), and state or local jurisdictions to ensure funds are quickly and effectively deployed throughout rural and urban communities;*
- *Modifying the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program to utilize the 2,200 state and local agencies that currently administer and distribute funding for 2 million families, to establish and fund emergency vouchers;*
- *Meeting multiple short and long-term affordable housing needs through the Home Investment Partnerships (HOME), Community Development Block Grant Development (CDBG), and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) program. A cross-cutting application of HUD's HOME, CDBG, and ESG programs can empower States and localities to provide immediate rental assistance for residents of non-assisted units; and provide states and localities a flexible tool to address emerging housing needs related to COVID-19.*

**3. Educate Senators on the Need to Limit and Target Evictions Moratorium:** The expanded eviction moratorium included in the House-passed HEROES Act lengthens the 120-day eviction moratorium provided under the CARES Act to 12 months. To date, NAHMA members have worked with their residents in providing housing stability through repayment plans, increased subsidy, and additional emergency funding, to minimize displacement during this pandemic. However, this eviction moratorium provision is broadly interpreted at the state and local levels. This results in implementation being unconnected to renters truly impacted by COVID-19 and a misinterpretation of renter obligations to adhere to lease requirements.

- *Please tell Senators that eviction moratoriums should not be applied to evictions unrelated to the circumstances caused by the pandemic. Prolonged eviction moratoriums not tied to the pandemic and without rental assistance worsens the economic uncertainty for everyone, including residents, housing providers, owners, lenders, and investors. Please urge Congress to clarify and refine this language in the next phase of relief.*

**Please take a moment to contact your lawmakers.**

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#### **How to Find Your Congressional Representatives**

- Write directly to your Senators and Representatives by using this grassroots tool: <https://democracy.io/#/>
- Locate your [U.S. senators'](#) website and contact information or Find your [U.S. representative's](#) website and contact information.

**Your legislators want to hear from you.** [Reach out](#) to NAHMA Government Affairs staff for assistance with advocacy.

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