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April 18, 2014

The Honorable Al Franken
U.S. Senate
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Franken,

The National Affordable Housing Management Association (NAHMA) would like to express our support for the Housing for Homeless Students Act of 2014. Your legislation would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to qualify homeless youth and veterans who are full-time students for purposes of the low income housing tax credit (LIHTC). This initiative will eliminate the tough choice that some residents face between losing their affordable LIHTC housing and pursuing their education.

NAHMA's mission is to promote development and preservation of quality affordable multifamily housing by advancing legislative and regulatory policy, and preparing affordable housing professionals to succeed in evolving economic and political environments. Our members are property owners and managers, industry stakeholders, and providers of goods and services to the affordable housing industry.

The Housing for Homeless Students Act will exempt certain individuals from the LIHTC student occupancy rule if they have experienced homelessness at any point in the five years prior to moving into a LIHTC property. This exemption will include homeless individuals covered by the definition of "homeless children and youth" in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The bill also includes an explicit exemption from the student rule for homeless veterans seeking an education. This provision will ensure that the men and women who have served our country have access to affordable housing.

Thank you for your leadership on this important matter. These changes to the LIHTC student rule will allow full-time students who experience homelessness or have recently experienced homelessness to become eligible (or retain eligibility) for LIHTC housing units. NAHMA believes that formerly homeless youth or veteran residents should not be displaced from affordable housing when they pursue educational opportunities that are necessary to improve their economic circumstances. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this and other affordable rental housing issues.

Sincerely,

Kris Cook, CAE
Executive Director