

March 28, 2014

The Honorable Tom Latham
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related
Agencies
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building

The Honorable Ed Pastor
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related
Agencies
2465 Rayburn House Office Building

Dear Chairman Latham and Ranking Member Pastor:

Safe, decent and affordable housing is critically important to the stability of our communities and neighborhoods. Federal assistance is particularly important to providing access to housing for our most vulnerable populations, including elderly, disabled, and veteran households. With an aging population and an increased number of service men and women coming home from war, our federal housing assistance programs that provide necessary assistance to these groups must be funded at levels that adequately meet their needs. As you consider the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Appropriations bill, we urge you to stand behind our most vulnerable populations and adequately fund the Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly, Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities programs, Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH), and the Section 8 Tenant- and Project-Based Assistance (TBRA and PBRA) programs for FY 2015.

The U.S. Census Bureau projects that with the aging of the Baby Boomer generation, the number of Americans who are 65 and older will grow 81% between 2010 and 2030. Research conducted by the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies further projects that the growing number of seniors on fixed incomes will likely outstrip the limited supply of affordable rentals. Moreover, a growing body of research indicates that baby boomers in the U.S. are more likely than the previous generation to have a disability as they age. Taken together, it is critical to provide adequate funding for housing programs that are necessary for the elderly and disabled. Section 202 is the only program under the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that provides housing exclusively for elderly households. Similarly, Section 811 specifically provides for the needs of people with disabilities. We request that you provide funding for these programs at \$440 million for Section 202 and \$160 million for Section 811. These levels are on par with the President's budget request, and represent a substantial increase compared to the amounts appropriated for these programs in FY 2014.

It is a well-known and shameful fact that our veterans are disproportionately represented among America's homeless population. HUD estimated that on any single night in 2013, there were 57,849 veterans without homes. The housing needs of our veterans are a growing

challenge; but instead of rising to the occasion, Congress has only managed to provide level funding for HUD's VASH program for the past two years. This program has served an estimated 58,155 homeless veterans nationwide since 2008. In these hard fiscal times, we request that at the very least, the VASH program is fully funded at its current level of \$75 million.

The Section 8 TBRA and PBRA programs remain crucial to addressing the needs of our nation's most vulnerable populations. Well over half of TBRA and PBRA recipients are elderly or disabled. These programs enable thousands of elderly and disabled individuals to afford to live independently. We request that you meet the President's request for the TBRA program at \$20 billion, and further provide an additional \$320 million to restore funding for the estimated 40,000 vouchers that were cut in 2013 as a result of the sequestration. In addition, we are concerned that the Administration's request of \$9.7 billion for the PBRA program is significantly less than its FY 2014 request (\$10.3 billion) as well as the FY 2013 enacted level (\$9.9 billion). During the last appropriations cycle, we noted that Administration's FY 2014 request for this program would be insufficient to fund the renewal of all existing contracts for a full 12 months. This continued short-funding of PBRA contract renewals is unacceptable. Therefore, we request that you fully fund the PBRA program at \$11.5 billion in FY 2015.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. Please contact Esther Kahng or Lisa Lederberger with Ranking Member Waters at extension 5-4247 if you have any questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

MAXINE WATERS
Member of Congress

MICHAEL CAPUANO
Member of Congress