

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 1, 2007

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Transportation, Housing and
Urban Development, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Christopher Bond
Ranking Member
Transportation, Housing, and
Urban Development, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Member Bond:

We are writing to urge you to support the highest fiscally responsible increase in funding for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program in the FY08 THUD appropriations bill. While we understand that many federal programs face tight funding constraints, we are concerned that the current level of funding for the Section 8 program does not come close to meeting the rental assistance need that currently exists in communities nationwide. Americans face increasingly unaffordable rental burdens and a lack of safe and affordable housing stock that will only be compounded without an adequate increase in funding for the Section 8 program.

As you know, the housing affordability burden falls most heavily on low-income renters throughout our country. We were pleased with your leadership during the drafting of the Continuing Resolution and the increased funding in the CR provided for Section 8. While maintaining funding for the vouchers that are currently in use, we must also provide enough funding to support new, or as they are known in the housing community, incremental Section 8 vouchers. According to the 2006 U.S. Conference of Mayors Hunger and Homelessness Survey, housing requests from low income families increased in 86 percent of the surveyed cities. Cities around the country continue to report more demand for Section 8 vouchers than they are able to meet due to lack of federal funding. Unfortunately, waiting lists will only grow longer if the Section 8 program does not receive increased funding.

While there are certainly areas of the Section 8 program that need to be examined and perhaps reformed, a number of different government agencies and advocacy organizations, including the Government Accountability Office and the Bipartisan Millennial Housing Commission, all cite the effectiveness of Section 8 in assisting low-income families in meeting some of their housing needs. The Millennial Housing Commission stated that the vouchers "should continue to be the linchpin of a national policy providing very low-income renters access to the privately owned housing stock" and called on Congress to fund substantial annual increments of Section 8 vouchers for families who need housing assistance. With an increase in funding for Section 8 in FY08, our communities will be better equipped to meet the rising demand for rental housing assistance.

Thank you for your consideration to our request. Your continued leadership on affordable housing issues is appreciated.

Sincerely,


Russell D. Feingold
United States Senator

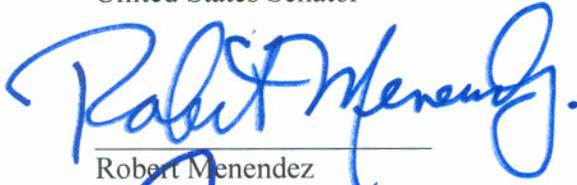

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United States Senator



Herb Kohl
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Tom Harkin
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John F. Kerry
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



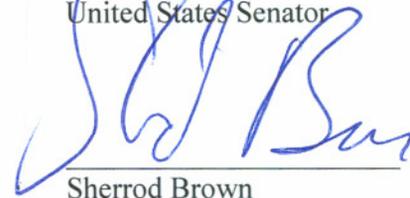
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



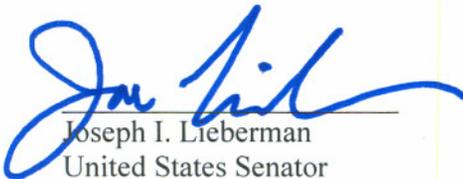
Hillary Rodham Clinton
United States Senator



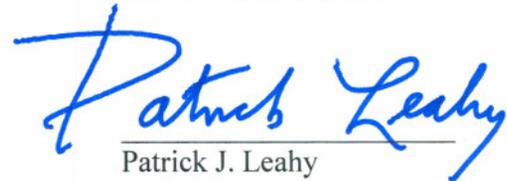
Edward M. Kennedy
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senator



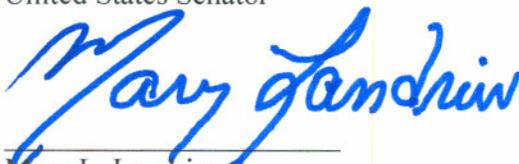
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Norm Coleman
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Mary L. Landrieu
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United States Senator

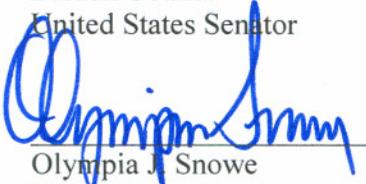
FY08 Section 8 Appropriations Letter



Barack Obama
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



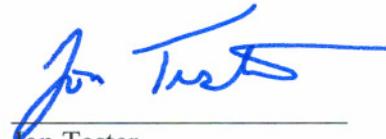
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United States Senator



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United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



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