

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 28, 2008

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 fiscal year 2009 THUD appropriations bill. We ask that you include funding sufficient to renew existing vouchers as well as fund new vouchers in fiscal year 2009. Increasing numbers of American families are facing housing affordability challenges, whether they are renters or homeowners, and we are concerned that the current level of funding for the Section 8 program does not come close to meeting the existing rental assistance need in communities nationwide. The housing affordability burden continues to fall most heavily on low-income renters throughout the country and increased funding for the Section 8 program will help meet the affordable rental housing needs of these American families.

The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, originally created in 1974, is the largest Federal housing program in terms of HUD's budget with approximately two million vouchers currently authorized. Yet the current number of vouchers does not come close to meeting the demand that exists in communities around our country including urban, suburban, and rural areas. We have heard from advocates in our states about the increased need for additional funding for the tenant-based program – not only to fund existing vouchers in use, but to also fund new, incremental tenant-based vouchers for low-income families currently unable to be served by the program. Advocates in our states also continue to tell us about the increasing numbers of families on waiting lists for vouchers and unfortunately, these waiting lists will only grow longer if the Section 8 program does not receive increased funding.

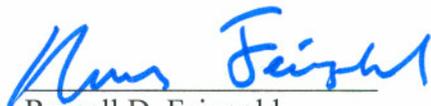
A number of different government agencies and advocacy organizations all cite the effectiveness of Section 8 in assisting low-income families in meeting some of their housing needs. In 2002, the Millennial Housing Commission reported to Congress that the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program is “flexible, cost-effective, and successful in its mission,” and 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.” The Commission also called on Congress to provide a substantial investment in the tenant-based Section 8 program in the future.

FY09 Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Letter

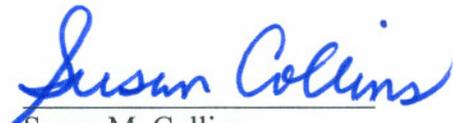
In order to address the growing need for affordable housing, we urge you to include the highest fiscally responsible increase for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program in the fiscal year 2009 THUD appropriations bill that will not only fully fund existing vouchers, but also provide funding for new Section 8 vouchers in 2009. We commend you for the support that you provided to the Section 8 tenant-based program in the Revised Continuing Appropriations Resolution for fiscal year 2007 as well as the Consolidated Appropriations Act in fiscal year 2008. We look forward to working with you to not only boost funding for this valuable federal program that helps millions of American families secure affordable housing, but also promote responsible reforms to the Section 8 program that will allow the program to better serve the needs of American families for years to come.

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

Sincerely,



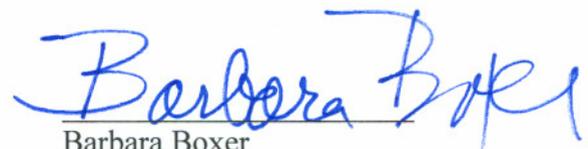
Russell D. Feingold
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Hillary Rodham Clinton
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



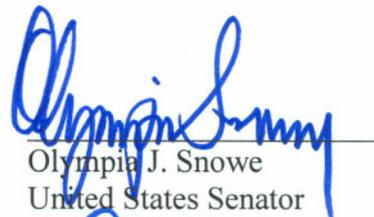
John Warner
United States Senator



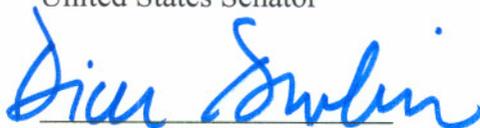
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



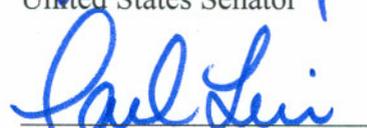
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Olympia J. Snowe
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



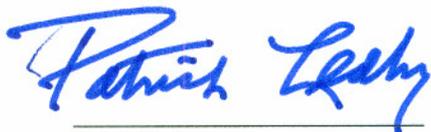
Carl Levin
United States Senator



Norm Coleman
United States Senator



Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senator



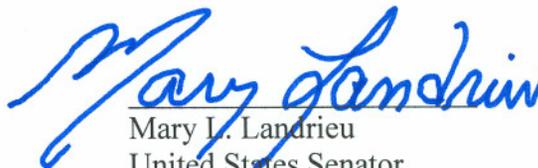
Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senator



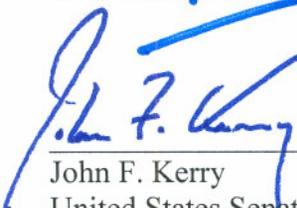
Herb Kohl
United States Senator



Edward M. Kennedy
United States Senator



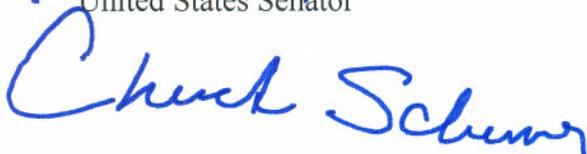
Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator



John F. Kerry
United States Senator



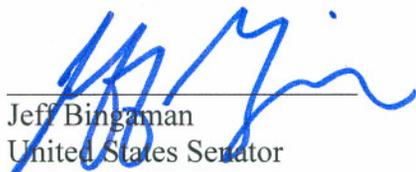
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



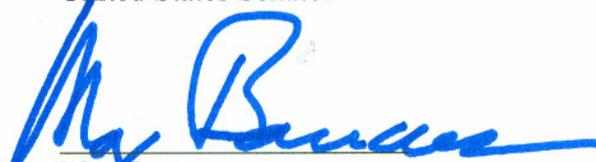
Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



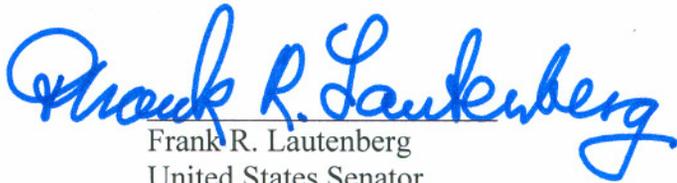
Barack Obama
United States Senator



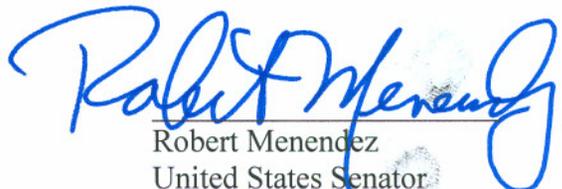
Jeff Bingaman
United States Senator



Max Baucus
United States Senator



Frank R. Lautenberg
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator

FY09 Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Letter



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator