

March XX, 2012

The Honorable Patty Murray, Chairman
The Honorable Susan Collins, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murray and Ranking Member Collins:

We are writing to express our support for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program. In these challenging budgetary times, it is important to maintain our commitment to successful programs that contribute to the economic health and security of our communities. We thank you for your past support of this vital program and urge the Subcommittee to maintain the federal government's commitment to community development programs and preserve strong funding for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program.

We recognize that the HOME program has faced challenges in the past several years and last year Congress approved important reforms that will help ensure that HOME resources are used effectively and responsibly. Nonetheless, HOME has borne a disproportionate share of recent federal budget cuts, seeing its total funding reduced by roughly 45 percent since 2010, which has real and serious consequences for families and communities. The HOME program serves as the largest federal block grant program to state and local governments designed exclusively to produce affordable housing for low-income families. Since Congress created the program it has been the cornerstone in the United States' affordable housing finance system. HOME provides a flexible resource to meet communities' highest priority affordable housing needs. At a time when states continue to face significant affordable housing shortages, the program has helped produce more than one million affordable homes nationally and helps approximately 143,000 families secure affordable housing each year. Funding for the HOME program has also successfully leveraged more than \$88 billion of public and private funds for affordable housing.

Despite recent criticisms of the program, the vast majority of HOME projects are completed successfully, on time and with surprising success given the impact of the current housing and economic crisis. The HOME program has continued to provide much needed funds to local communities for tenant-based rental assistance, rehabilitation of affordable rental and ownership housing, and construction of affordable housing. Additionally, the HOME program provides down-payment assistance to help creditworthy families become homeowners, and housing vouchers to low income families and those on the brink of homelessness. HOME funds often assist seniors, persons with disabilities and the homeless in ways which directly respond to local priorities and needs. As the need for affordable housing continues to grow, for many states and local governments HOME is the only reliable funding for affordable and special needs housing development available. Despite the growing need for HOME funds this program has faced significant cuts in recent years. In light of these drastic cuts, communities have struggled to continue their programs and have discontinued critical projects for low- and moderate-income persons. Therefore, we ask you to maintain critical support for the HOME program in the Fiscal Year 2013 Transportation-Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations bill. We thank you for your consideration of our request and look forward to working with you on this important matter.

Sincerely,