

Support Section 8 Rental Assistance Programs

From: The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
Sent By: john.doty@mail.house.gov
Date: 3/5/2010

March 5, 2010

Help Americans Secure Affordable Housing: Support Section 8 Rental Assistance Programs

Cosign the letter to the Transportation-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee

This is a programmatic request; no financial disclosure is required.

Deadline COB March 12, 2010

Dear Colleague:

Please join us in asking the Transportation-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee to fully fund the Section 8 Tenant-Based and Project-Based Rental Assistance Programs and to fund 250,000 additional tenant-based vouchers. It is important that Congress fully fund these critical programs and expand opportunities to low-income families during these difficult economic times.

HUD's Section 8 programs help low-income elderly, families with children, and people with disabilities secure and maintain decent, affordable homes. In both urban and rural communities, Section 8 rental assistance provides the foundation for millions of individuals and families to live with dignity, maintain steady work, and improve the lives of their children.

Given the severity of our housing and economic crisis, it is crucial we continue providing strong, bipartisan support for the Section 8 programs. While Congress moves forward with assisting homeowners in distress, we must not forget families who rent. To sign on to this letter or if you have any questions please contact John Doty (5-5635) with Representative Nadler or Sean Hughes (5-2361) with Representative Velázquez by Friday, March 12th at noon.

Sincerely,

/s
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

/s
Nydia Velázquez
Member of Congress

March __, 2010

The Honorable John Olver
Chairman, Transportation, Housing and
Urban Development and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Latham
Ranking Member, Transportation, Housing and
Urban Development and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member:

We respectfully request that you fully fund the renewal of Section 8 Tenant-Based and Project-Based Rental Assistance and provide additional funds for 250,000 new, “incremental” tenant-based vouchers in the FY 2011 Transportation-HUD Appropriations Act.

These programs help 3.3 million low-income households, nearly all of which are elderly, people with disabilities, and families with children, to rent homes at a cost that is affordable to them. We very much appreciate the tremendous efforts made by the Committee on Appropriations to restore stability to these critical programs over the past three years. Thanks to the Committee’s efforts, for example, more than half of the 150,000 vouchers that were lost due to funding instability from 2004 to 2006 have since been restored to use, thereby helping tens of thousands of families to secure affordable rental housing.

Today, with unemployment and poverty rising as a result of the economic recession, it is vital that the FY 2011 Transportation-HUD Appropriations Act provide enough funding to ensure that the Section 8 rental assistance now being used by low-income families will be fully renewed in 2010.

In addition, we urge you to provide funds for 250,000 new, “incremental” tenant-based vouchers. Congress has not funded a substantial increase in rental assistance since 2001, nearly a decade ago. Yet from 2001 to 2007, the number of poor families with severe housing affordability problems — that is, who are paying more than half their income for housing — increased by 1.1 million, or 29 percent. The problem has further worsened since 2007 due to the economic recession, as the effects of softening housing markets have been more than offset by a steep increase in the number of families experiencing job losses and falling into poverty. Reports indicate that homelessness is rising in many communities across the country.

When asked what they need most to reduce homelessness, the top response (96 percent) of city officials is “more subsidized housing, such as Housing Choice vouchers,” according to a recent survey by the U.S. Conference of Mayors. The Section 8 voucher program has always received

broad bipartisan support because it is the most flexible and cost effective way to provide rental assistance. A wide range of organizations, including the Center for American Progress, the National Low Income Housing Coalition, and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities have called on Congress to fund one to two million new vouchers over the next ten years to reduce poverty and homelessness, help low-income seniors and people with disabilities to live with dignity, and enable families to access better educational and economic opportunities.

This year, we ask again for your support in fully funding both Section 8 rental assistance programs, as well as in providing additional funding for new vouchers to help meet the large and growing need for affordable housing. Thank you for your attention to this matter and your continued support of these important programs.

Sincerely,