



May 4, 2020

Via email: nan_cahall@portman.senate.gov

Sen. Rob J. Portman
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Portman:

Affordable Housing Advocates (AHA) is gravely concerned about the negative and lasting impact COVID-19 will have on the state of affordable housing, homelessness, and economical viability of the residents of Greater Cincinnati and the State of Ohio. As the local coalition in Greater Cincinnati promoting good affordable housing for all, AHA believes much more needs to be done to ensure that low-income workers, persons with disabilities and seniors are protected during these most difficult times. Therefore we ask that Congress appropriate additional funds to directly assist Americans who are in crisis.

We know that we can count on you to push for increased protections in the next coronavirus relief package. The residents of Greater Cincinnati appreciate your recent efforts to ensure that the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program receives the extra \$11.6 Million in HUD Grants it so desperately needs. With your great efforts, Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) now has \$1,423,790.00 in funds to ensure that the health and safety of HCV participants across the city are better protected, while also reducing the participants' risk of losing their affordable housing.

The \$12 billion in homelessness and affordable housing resources included in the "Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act" are an important first step, but it is not nearly enough to meet the need. **AHA believes the next coronavirus relief package must include at least:**

- \$11.5 billion for Emergency Solutions Grants,
- \$100 billion for emergency rental assistance, and
- a national moratorium on all evictions and foreclosures.

Ohio and Greater Cincinnati's most vulnerable people are at the greatest risk of negative health and economic impacts of the Coronavirus. People experiencing homelessness are especially

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Mission: To promote the availability of high quality, safe, accessible, affordable housing in the Greater Cincinnati Area.

vulnerable to contracting the disease, and once infected are more likely to require critical care and to die from COVID-19. Immediate resources are needed to curb the spread of coronavirus and save lives.

Any forthcoming legislation to address the impact of the coronavirus must include an **additional \$11.5 billion in Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding**. This combined with the \$4 billion previously provided in the CARES Act will reach the funding level needed to expand access to emergency shelter, short-term rental assistance, and housing stabilization services. ESG funds should also be used to provide medical respite care, outreach, and street medicine for people experiencing homelessness.

Housing stability will be crucial in the coming weeks and months, especially for low-income renters. **Congress must provide at least \$100 billion for emergency rental assistance to prevent mass evictions and increased homelessness** and to ensure the continued viability of our country's essential affordable housing infrastructure.

Congress should also move to **enact a uniform moratorium on all foreclosures and evictions to address the current patchwork of moratoria** at the federal, state, and local levels to assure each of us we won't lose our homes during the pandemic.

In Ohio and Greater Cincinnati, the growing population without access to affordable or adequate housing leaves a large sector of the population vulnerable to the negative economic, health and social impacts of COVID-19. Congress must act now. We all benefit when we prioritize the needs of the lowest-income workers, seniors and persons with disabilities in our country. Doing so protects the health and lives of tens of millions of people, the front-line providers serving them, and our healthcare systems. It slows the trajectory and speed of the pandemic, improves the health of the entire country, and ensures an equitable and just recovery.

AHA urges you to ensure that the next Congressional response package further addresses the needs of our lowest-income neighbors by including at least \$11.5 billion for Emergency Solutions Grants, \$100 billion for emergency rental assistance, and a uniform national moratorium on all evictions and foreclosures.

Thank you,

Affordable Housing Advocates

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John E. Schrider, Jr.", is positioned above the printed name.

John E. Schrider, Jr.
Chair, Affordable Housing Advocates