

July 21, 2020

Senator Timothy M. Kaine
231 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Mark Warner
703 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Pass Emergency Housing Protections and Relief

Dear Senators Kaine and Warner,

I am writing to urge you to immediately enact the critical housing investments and protections included in two bills, either of which would greatly help the American people: the "Emergency Housing Protections and Relief Act of 2020" (H.R. 7301) and the "Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act." This legislation would immediately work to prevent evictions and homelessness and promote housing stability among people with the greatest needs during and after this crisis.

The challenges facing American households due to COVID-19 are broad ranging and have major impacts to our public health and economy. The CARES Act's stimulus checks and expanded unemployment benefits have helped, but these income boosts are coming to an end this week.

Many people with the greatest needs are facing challenges in accessing these resources, and even those who were successful will still be severely rent-burdened and at risk of homelessness unless Congress provides targeted assistance.

A vote in favor of either of these bills will have a direct, positive impact on:

- People experiencing homelessness, who are especially vulnerable to contracting COVID-19. Once infected, they are more likely to require critical care and to die from the disease. This has enormous implications for individuals, their communities, and our already overstretched hospital systems. An additional \$11.5 billion in Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding will provide the full resources needed to prevent and respond to outbreaks among people experiencing homelessness.
- Housing stability, especially for low-income renters. We must pass legislation to include a uniform, 12-month eviction and foreclosure moratorium policy to protect all renters and homeowners - especially at a time when our collective health depends on each of us staying home. This policy would address the current patchwork of responses, many of which expire in the coming weeks.

- People who have lost income as a result of the pandemic, and who will struggle to cover large sums of back-rent once it comes due. Voting for \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance will protect American households from the destabilizing impacts of evictions and, in worst cases, homelessness. Emergency rental assistance is also necessary to ensure the continued viability of our country's essential affordable housing infrastructure.
- Housing stability - through an additional \$13 billion in funding, including 100,000 new emergency housing vouchers targeted to people with the greatest needs, such as people experiencing or at risk of homelessness and survivors of domestic violence.

Prioritizing the needs of the lowest-income and most marginalized people in our country will benefit us all by protecting 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.

Every day that Congress waits to enact these vital housing investments and protections, policymakers put millions of low-income people at risk of eviction and homelessness. I urge you to support the critical housing resources and protections included in H.R. 7301 and the HEROES Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'HR', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Heather Raspberry
Executive Director
Housing Association of Nonprofit Developers (HAND)