



September 26, 2024

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
Chairman
United States Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tim Scott
Ranking Member
United States Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

To Chairman Brown and Ranking Member Scott:

We – the National Low Income Housing Coalition, National League of Cities, National Association of Counties, Enterprise Community Partners, and the 483 additional national, state, and local organizations listed below – urge you to **include in any bipartisan housing package that advances in the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee the “Reforming Disaster Recovery Act” (S.1686)**, as introduced by Senators Brian Schatz (D-HI), Susan Collins (R-ME), Patty Murray (D-WA), Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Roger Wicker (R-MS), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Jon Tester (D-MT), Thom Tillis (R-NC), Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), Todd Young (R-IN), Cory Booker (D-NJ), and Alex Padilla (D-CA) and Representative Al Green (D-TX). This bipartisan legislation will make the flow of disaster recovery funds faster, more equitable, and more accountable to taxpayers. The bill was also included in the Senate Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development appropriation bill for FY 2023, and the House version of the FY 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

Millions of disaster survivors across the country are facing catastrophic, life-threatening, extreme weather events, including stronger hurricanes, extreme heat, unprecedented drought, and severe wildfires. In 2023, there were 25 separate billion-dollar disasters, including extreme tornado outbreaks in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee, and across the central U.S., as well as devastating wildfires in Hawaii, severe flooding in California, and extreme blizzards in upstate New York. These disasters come after multiple other disasters in 2022, Hurricane Ian along the Florida Coast to catastrophic flooding in East Kentucky, deadly winter storms, and tornado outbreaks leaving behind devastated households and communities across the country.

If enacted, the Reforming Disaster Recovery Act would permanently authorize the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD)’s Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program, which provides flexible grants to help cities,

counties, and states recover from Presidentially declared disasters and rebuild affordable housing and other infrastructure after a disaster, especially in low-income areas.

Insurance and short-term federal assistance are unable to cover the cost of a disaster for many low-income homeowners, renters, and people experiencing homelessness. State and local governments often struggle to repair infrastructure and facilitate economic development in low-income communities. Many of the lowest-income households – who are disproportionately affected by disasters but receive the least amount of assistance afterward – face homelessness or displacement as shorter-term assistance programs end. As the only source for federal long-term recovery funds, CDBG-DR can fill this gap in assistance and ensure every disaster survivor and their communities are able to fully and equitably recover.

Although other federal agencies have standing resources to quickly serve communities when disasters strike, CDBG-DR funds are only made available through special congressional approval. Due to the program's lack of permanent authorization, HUD must write a new set of regulations to guide state and local grantees each time it appropriates funds. This ad hoc system can delay funding for over three years after a disaster occurs. As a result, recovery timelines are lengthened, economies stagnate, and homelessness and out-migration from disaster-impacted areas increase.

The Reforming Disaster Recovery Act will help ensure that long-term disaster recovery funds are made quickly available after disasters and that all disaster survivors and their communities can fully and equitably recover. The 2019 version of the bill was unanimously passed out of the House Financial Services Committee and was approved by the House of Representatives through a bipartisan vote. HUD and the Government Accountability Office under the past two administrations have agreed that permanently authorizing the CDBG-DR program would vastly improve how the country's most important long-term disaster recovery program operates. In addition to codifying the CDBG-DR program in statute, the bill contains critical reforms to help ensure a more efficient and equitable disaster recovery and mitigate future risks by:

- Requiring that the use of funds are balanced between infrastructure and housing;
- Ensuring that housing funds are spent proportionally between homeowners and renters;
- Requiring HUD to release information on disaster recovery to the public – disaggregated by income, race, geography and all protected classes of individuals under federal civil rights and nondiscrimination laws;
- Requiring federal agencies to share all data to improve coordination of the disaster recovery process, as well as increase oversight and data transparency;
- Authorizing the creation of a CDBG-DR Reserve Fund that can quickly disperse initial recovery funding post-disaster without waiting for a new congressional action;
- Developing a formula to allocate assistance to the most impacted areas;
- Maintaining the current requirement that 70% of the funds benefit Low and Moderate Income households;
- Creating a capacity building and technical assistance set-aside for grantees;

- Ensuring that state action plans receive at least 14 days for public comment and requiring states to engage with stakeholders in the impacted areas;
- Promoting disaster mitigation and resiliency by establishing an Office of Disaster Recovery and Resilient Communities at HUD;
- Creating a significant set-aside for disaster mitigation activities; and
- Creating specific minimum construction standards for areas designated as hazard prone by HUD and FEMA.

Again, we urge you to support this important bipartisan legislation and include it in any bipartisan housing package that advances in the Banking Committee. By passing the Reforming Disaster Recovery Act, Congress can provide meaningful relief to the millions of disaster survivors most in need.

Sincerely,

***National and Multistate Organizations
(155)***

AARP

American Association on Health and Disability

American Council of the Blind

American Flood Coalition Action

Americans for Financial Reform

Antioch University

Anthropocene Alliance

Appalachia Service Project

APRIL

Autistic People of Color Fund

Autistic Self Advocacy Network

Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network

Avesta Housing

Benevolent Rural Alliance for Cultural and Environmental Strategies (B.R.A.C.E.S)

Bodaken and Associates

BPC Action

Build Change

Catholic Charities USA

Center for Community Progress

Center for Disability Rights, Inc.

Center for Independence

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Children's HealthWatch

Coalition for Environment, Equity, and Resilience

Coalition for Home Repair

Coalition of Community Organizations
Coalition on Human Needs
The Coelho Center for Disability Law, Policy and Innovation
Collaborative solutions
CommonSpirit Health
Community Change
Community Change Action
Community HousingWorks
Community Opportunity Alliance
Community Solutions
Consumer Action
Consumer Credit and Budget Counseling, Inc. dba National Foundation for Debt Management
Council for Affordable and Rural Housing
Council of Affairs for Naturally Occurring Autochthons (CANOA)
Council of Large Public Housing Authorities
Council of State Community Development Agencies
Corporation for Supportive Housing
Crisis Cleanup
Disability Action Center - NW, Inc.
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
Disaster Justice Network
Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition
Drexel University
EcoArts Connections
The Elevated Studio
Emergency Legal Responders
Enterprise Community Partners
Equal Justice Works
Equal Rights Center
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Fahe
Fair Share Housing Center
Feeding the Carolinas
Fundors Together to End Homelessness
Good360
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative
Grounded Solutions Network
Habitat for Humanity International
HDC MidAtlantic
HeirShares
Hispanic Federation
Home for All Coalition

Homeless Advocacy for All (Ha4aLL)
Housing Advisory Group
Housing Assistance Council
Integrated Community Solutions, Inc
Jewish Women International
Lakeshore Foundation
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Lisa A Baker Consulting
Livelihoods Knowledge Exchange Network
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Low Income Investment Fund
Lowlander Center
Manufactured Home Institute (MHI)
Martignetti Planned Giving Advisors, LLC
MDC, Inc.
Mercy Housing
Modular Building Institute
MPACT Strategic Consulting LLC
My Dog Is My Home
NAACP
National Affordable Housing Management Association
National Alliance of HUD Tenants
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Association of Counties
National Association of Affordable Housing Lenders
National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials
National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders
National Coalition for Latinxs with Disabilities
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Community Action Partnership
National Community Development Association
National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC)
National Consumer Law Center
National Council of St. Vincent de Paul
The National Domestic Violence Hotline
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Housing Conference
National Housing Law Project
National Housing Resource Center
National Housing Trust
National Institute of Minority Economic Development
National League of Cities

National Leased Housing Association
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National NeighborWorks Association
Natural Resource Defense Council
NECHAMA -- Jewish Response to Disaster
Network Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New Hope Collaborative
The NRP Group
Oxfam America
Pallet Shelter
People's Action
RESULTS Educational Fund
Planners for Puerto Rico
Poverty & Race Research Action Council (PRRAC)
Presbyterian Church (USA) Office of Public Witness
Protect Our Stolen Treasure (P.O.S.T)
Preservation of Affordable Housing
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
Public Housing Association of Residents
Rebuilding Together
Research, Policy, & Impact Center
Rural Community Assistance Corporation
SBP
Shimberg Center for Housing Studies - University of Florida
Smart Home America
Southern Coalition for Social Justice
Southern Economic Advancement Project
Southern Poverty Law Center Action Fund
SPEAK
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future
Team Rubicon
Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc.
Tulane University - Consortium for Equitable Disaster Resilience (CEDR)
Turtle Island Restoration Network
The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies
UnidosUS
Union of Concerned Scientists
United Church of Christ
United Native American Housing Association
United Policyholders
Voices of Community Activists and Leaders
Volunteers of America Ohio and Indiana
The William Averette Anderson Fund

World Institute on Disability
The Young People's Guild

State and Local Organizations or Governments
(332)

Alabama

Alabama Province Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDO)
Center for Fair Housing
Community Service Programs of West AL
Legacy 166
Unless U

Alaska

Alaska Coalition on Housing & Homelessness
Alaska Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD)

Arizona

Foundation for Senior Living

Arkansas

ACHANGE
Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
Arkansas Appleseed Legal Justice Center
Arkansas Coalition of Marshallese

California

California Coalition for Rural Housing
California Housing Partnership
California Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)
Catholic Charities Yolo Solano
City and County of San Francisco
City of Long Beach
City of San Diego
City of Santa Ana
Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP)
Connecting Point
Contra Costa Crisis Center
County of Sonoma Department of Health Services
Eden Housing
Genesis
Haus of a Stranger
Housing California

Legal Aid of Sonoma County
The Marvel Method
Mayor, City of West Sacramento
Mono County
Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California
Office of Mayor Darrell Steinberg
People's Self-Help Housing
Public Advocates
Sacramento Housing Alliance
San Joaquin Valley Housing Collaborative
Self-Help Enterprises
Sisters of St. Joseph Healthcare Foundation
Sunseri Construction

Colorado

Colorado Coalition for the Homeless
Colorado Poverty Law Project
Denver Metro Fair Housing Center

Connecticut

Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness
The Housing Collective
NEST
Partnership for Strong Communities

Delaware

Division of Public Health, Office of Preparedness
Housing Alliance Delaware

District of Columbia

DC Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)

Florida

Affordable Homeownership Foundation, Inc.
Arcadia-DeSoto Habitat for Humanity
Central Florida Jobs With Justice
Community Justice Project
Disability Rights Florida
Disability Solutions for Independent Living
Florida Housing Coalition
Florida Independent Living Council, Inc.
Florida Supportive Housing Coalition
Habitat for Humanity of Florida

Habitat for Humanity of Greater Miami, Florida
Habitat for Humanity Lake-Sumter, Florida
Habitat for Humanity of Jacksonville, Inc.
Highlands Habitat for Humanity
Homeless Coalition of Polk County
Pensacola Habitat for Humanity
NAACP Miami-Dade
Self Reliance Inc Center for Independent Living
St. Lucie Habitat for Humanity of Florida
Solar Habitats

Georgia

Community Outreach Training Center, Inc.
Georgia Alliance to End Homelessness
Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Hawaii

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii
Habitat for Humanity Maui, Inc.
Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities
Lanakila Pacific
Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc.
Maui Housing Hui
Maui Rapid Response
Maui United Way

Idaho

Boise/Ada County Homeless Coalition
Idaho Anti-Trafficking Coalition
Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities
Idaho State Independent Living Council
Intermountain Fair Housing Council
Living Independence Network Corporation
South Central Community Action Partnership

Illinois

Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance
HOPE Fair Housing Center
Housing Action Illinois
Open Communities
South Suburban Housing Center
Supportive Housing Providers Association

Indiana

Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana
Habitat for Humanity of Indiana
Indiana Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)
Prosperity Indiana

Iowa

Disaster Resilience Institute
Sisters of the Presentation, Dubuque, IA

Kentucky

Catholic Charities- Diocese of Owensboro
Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky
Kentucky Affordable Housing Coalition
Kentucky Equal Justice Center
Kentucky Habitat for Humanity, Inc
Kentucky Housing Corporation
Kentucky Voices for Health
Kentucky Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)
Juniper Health
Mental Health America of Kentucky
VOCAL-KY

Louisiana

A Community Voice – ACORN
Acadiana Regional Coalition on Homelessness & Housing
Alliance for Affordable Energy
Coalition for the Homeless (Louisville)
Common Ground Relief
Cycles Life Solutions
East St. Tammany Habitat for Humanity Inc.
Feeding Louisiana
For a Better Bayou
Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance
Habitat for Humanity of Greater Baton Rouge
Habitat for Humanity St. Tammany West
HousingNOLA
HousingLOUISIANA
Lafayette Habitat for Humanity
Louisiana Appleseed Center for Law and Justice
Louisiana Just Recovery Network
Micah Six Eight Mission
M-W & Associates

Neighborhood Development Foundation
The Neutral Ground Collective
Southeastern Louisiana University
SUNVESTKA

Maine

Coastal Enterprises, Inc.
Maine Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD)
Penquis Community Action Agency
Quality Housing Coalition

Maryland

Advocacy and Training Center
Community Development Network of Maryland
Maryland Center on Economic Policy
Montgomery Housing Partnership
Public Justice Center

Massachusetts

CAN-DO
Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations
The Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless

Michigan

Business Men & Women Social Club of Detroit
Detroit Affordable Housing and Homelessness Task Force
Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness

Minnesota

Disaster Justice
Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing
Minnesota Housing Partnership
Minnesota Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)
Our Spring Lake Store LLC

Mississippi

Cherokee Concerned Citizens
Mississippi Center for Justice
Mississippi Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)

Missouri

Empower Missouri
United Way of Greater Kansas City

Nevada

RESULTS Nevada

New Hampshire

Cross Roads House, Inc.

Granite State Organizing Project

Housing Action New Hampshire

Lakes Region Community Developers

New Hampshire Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)

New Jersey

Affordable Housing Alliance

Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey

Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness

Monarch Housing Associates

New Jersey Organizing Project

New Jersey Tenants Organization

NJ Coalition to End Homelessness

Project Freedom, Inc.

Solution To End Poverty Soon (STEPS)

New Mexico

NAACP Santa Fe NM

New York

Association for Neighborhood & Housing Development

Center for NYC Neighborhoods, Inc.

Community Voices Heard

COMPASS at Broad St. Presbyterian Church

Disaster Law Project

Greater Syracuse Tenants Network

Housing and Family Services of Greater New York

The Neighborhood Preservation Coalition of New York State

New Hour

New York State Rural Housing Coalition

NYS Tenants & Neighbors

Voices Of Community Activists & Leaders (VOCAL-NY)

New Destiny

St. John's Episcopal Hospital Episcopal Health Services

Supportive Housing Network of New York

United Tenants of Albany

North Carolina

AIJ Connection Services, Inc.
Albemarle Hospital Foundation
AMEXCAN, Inc.
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Raleigh
City of Greensboro
Coastal Carolina Riverwatch
Crystal Coast Water Keepers
DataWorks NC
Disability Rights North Carolina
Down Home North Carolina
Eastern Carolina Board of Realtist
Legal Services of North Carolina (LSNC)
Little Listeners of the Carolina's
Lock Out Love Inc
Mid-East Commission
Mosaic Development Group
NC Disaster Response and Resilience Network
NC Statewide Independent Living Council
NC 100
New Urban Residential
North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness
North Carolina Housing Coalition
North Carolina Riverwatch
Pender County Long Term Recovery Group
RiverLink Inc.
Robeson County Church and Community Center
Robeson County Disaster Recovery Committee
United Way of Alamance County
Working Landscapes
WZA Consultant

Ohio

Affordable Housing Alliance of Central Ohio
Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board Serving Athens, Hocking and
Vinton Counties
City Mission of Findlay
CityWide Development Corporation
City of Cincinnati
Clinton County Services for the Homeless, Inc.
Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio
Columbus Apartment Association
Community Action Agency

Community Action Wayne/Medina
Community Housing Network
Community Shelter Board
Communities United for Action
County Corp
Crisis Care Line/House of Transition
Dayton Tenant Union
Family & Community Services
Found House Interfaith Housing Network
Habitat for Humanity of Greater Dayton
Highland County Homeless Shelter
Home is the Foundation
Homeless Outreach...Mt. Carmel
Hope Whispers Community Organization Inc.
Huckleberry House
Human Service Chamber of Franklin County
ILCAO
Jones Rehab Inc
Lowenstein Development, LLC
Miami Valley Fair Housing Center, Inc.
Neighborhood Properties Inc.
Northern Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality
Office for Social Concerns
Ohio Animal Advocates
The Refuge
Sarah's Friends
Spatialist LLC
StarkFresh
St. Mary Development Corp.
Transformation Life Center
United Way of Greater Cincinnati
Warren Metropolitan Housing Authority, OH (WMHA)

Oregon

Bienestar
CASA of Oregon
Farmworker Housing Dev. Corporation
ROSE Community Development
Santiam Integration Team

Pennsylvania

Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania
Move Past Plastic (MPP)

Pennsylvania Association of Housing & Redevelopment Agencies
Pennsylvania Department of Human Services

Rhode Island

Housing Network of Rhode Island
HousingWorks RI at RWU
RI Coalition to End Homelessness

South Carolina

ACLU of South Carolina
City of Greenville
Food For All
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center
South Carolina Association of Community Action Partnerships, Inc.
South Carolina Conference of the NAACP
South Carolina Housing Justice Network

Tennessee

African American Clergy Collective of Tennessee
Black Clergy Collaborative of Memphis
Community Bridges, Inc.
Erwin Housing Authority
Open Table Nashville
Sowing Justice
Statewide Independent Living Council of Tennessee

Texas

Air Alliance Houston
Animal Investigation & Response
Bayou City Waterkeeper
Center for Civic and Public Policy Improvement
Come dream. Come build. (CDCB)
Connective TX
Disability Rights Texas
Disaster Housing Consultants
Fair Housing and Neighborhood Rights
Harvey Forgotten Survivors Caucus
HOME Coalition
Liberty County Long-Term Recovery Committee
Northeast Action Collective
Texas A&M University
Texas Appleseed
Texas Homeless Network

Texas Housers
Texas Humane Legislation Network
United Way of Greater Houston
UT for Housing Transparency
West Street Recovery

Utah

Clearfield City
Utah Housing Coalition

Vermont

Housing and Homelessness Alliance of Vermont
Randolph Area Community Development Corporation
Vermont Interfaith Action
Vermont State Housing Authority

Virginia

Piedmont Housing Alliance
Virginia Housing Alliance
Virginia Supportive Housing

Washington

Center for Independence
Central Washington Disability Resources
City of Everett, WA
City of Olympia
Village Cohousing Works

West Virginia

WV Coalition to End Homelessness

Wisconsin

Independence First

Puerto Rico

Consensus for Puerto Rico CD & CA Corp.
Firmes, Unidos y Resilientes con la Abogacía (FURIA Inc.)
Junta Comunitaria Pastillo Tibes Corp.
La Fundacion del Perpetuo Socorro
Resiliency Law Center
Un Nuevo Amanecer Inc.

CC:

The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Majority Leader, U.S. Senate

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader, U.S. Senate

The Honorable Mike Johnson, Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries, Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Patrick McHenry, Committee on Financial Services, U.S. House of Representatives

Ranking Member Maxine Waters, Committee on Financial Services, U.S. House of Representatives