May 12, 2022

Dear Chairman Schatz and Ranking Member Collins:

As the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) Subcommittee finalizes its Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 appropriations bill, we encourage you to support those who have defended our freedom by funding the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Veterans Affairs and Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program at or above the FY 2022 enacted level.

HUD-VASH combines HUD’s Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance program for low-income renters with case management and clinical services for veterans provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The program targets chronically homeless veterans who often have severe mental and physical health problems, and/or substance use disorders. Frequent emergency room visits, multiple treatment attempts, and limited access to social supports increase the barriers for homeless veterans to obtaining permanent, stable housing. Among the VA’s homeless assistance programs, HUD-VASH enrolls the largest number and largest percentage of veterans who have experienced long-term or repeated homelessness.

Because of its focus on chronic homelessness, the HUD-VASH program has been highly successful in helping our nation’s veterans escape homelessness, combining housing assistance and supportive services into one resource. Since 2008, HUD has awarded over 100,000 HUD-VASH vouchers through public housing agencies across the country. According to HUD’s 2021 Annual Homeless Assessment Report, from 2020 to 2021, the number of veterans experiencing sheltered homelessness decreased by 10 percent. Still, chronic homelessness among veterans persists. While more than 75,000 veterans are currently in permanent housing through HUD-VASH, HUD’s annual report found that about 19,750 veterans experienced sheltered homelessness on a single night in 2021. Unsheltered homelessness among veterans increased by 6 percent between the 2019 and 2020 point-in-time count.

HUD-VASH vouchers ensure that women and men in uniform who have sacrificed so much for our country have a stable place to call home and the supportive services they need to heal and rebuild their lives. That is why HUD-VASH funding must be increased, or at least remain level, to achieve the goal of ending homelessness among veterans.
We urge you to fund HUD-VASH at or above the FY 2022 enacted level. With steady or additional funding, public housing authorities can maximize the number of families served, and HUD-VASH case managers will have the tools to comprehensively address the needs of homeless veterans in America.

Sincerely,

Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

Kevin Cramer
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Jack Reed
United States Senator
Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

Benjamin L. Cardin  
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Tina Smith  
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Raphael G. Warnock  
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Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

Chris Van Hollen  
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Tammy Baldwin  
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Jon Tester  
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Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator
Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator

Robert Menendez  
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator

Alex Padilla  
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator

Ron Wyden  
United States Senator
Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator

Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator

Mark Kelly  
United States Senator