

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 9, 2019

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing,
and Urban Development, and Related
Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing,
and Urban Development, and Related
Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Collins and Ranking Member Reed:

As the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) Subcommittee finalizes its Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 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 2019 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.

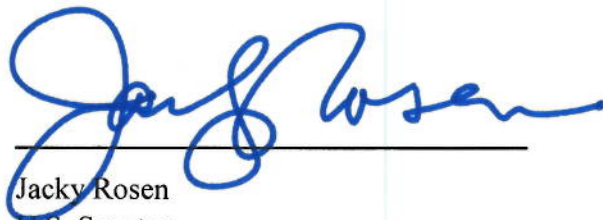
Because of its focus on chronic homelessness, the HUD-VASH program has been highly successful in helping our nation's veterans escape homelessness, combining housing assistance and supportive services into one resource. Since 2008, HUD has awarded over 97,500 HUD-VASH vouchers through public housing agencies across the country. According to HUD's 2018 Annual Homeless Assessment Report, the number of veterans experiencing homelessness has decreased by almost 50% since 2010. Still, chronic homelessness among veterans persists. While approximately 4,000 veterans obtained permanent housing through HUD-VASH in 2018, HUD's annual report found that nearly 38,000 veterans experienced homelessness on a single night that same year.

When Congress reduced HUD-VASH funding in FY 2017 from \$60 million to \$40 million, the level at which it remains today, the number of HUD-VASH vouchers issued dropped from 8,000 to 5,000. HUD-VASH funding must remain level, if not increased, to achieve the goal of ending homelessness among veterans. 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.

We urge you to fund HUD-VASH at or above the FY 2019 levels. 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.

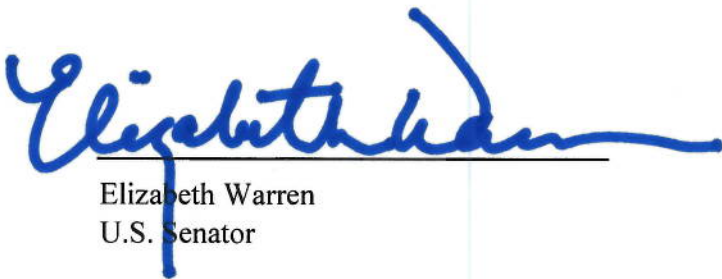
Sincerely,



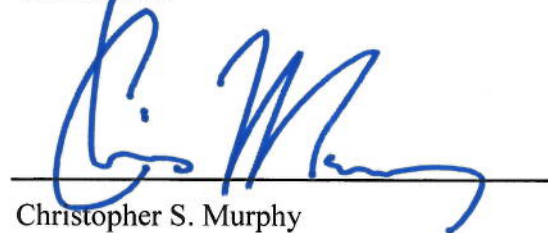
Jacky Rosen
U.S. Senator



Kevin Cramer
U.S. Senator



Elizabeth Warren
U.S. Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
U.S. Senator




Mazie K. Hirono
U.S. Senator



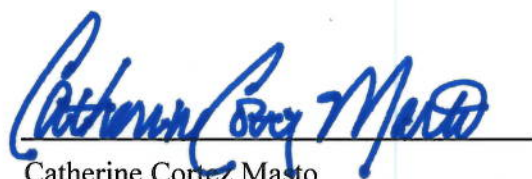
Richard Blumenthal
U.S. Senator



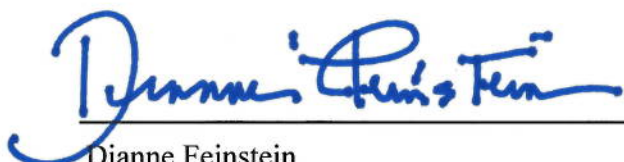
Amy Klobuchar
U.S. Senator



Sherrod Brown
U.S. Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
U.S. Senator



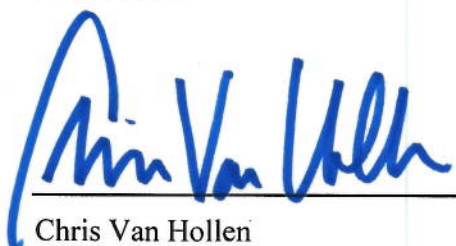
Dianne Feinstein
U.S. Senator



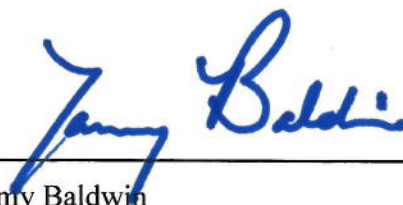
Tammy Duckworth
U.S. Senator



Jon Tester
U.S. Senator



Chris Van Hollen
U.S. Senator



Tammy Baldwin
U.S. Senator



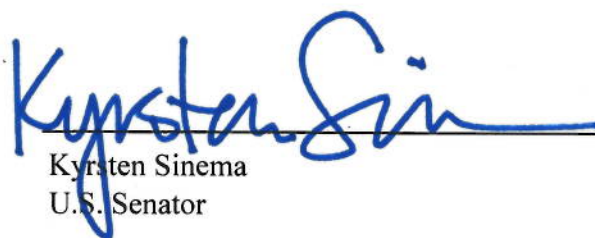
Kamala D. Harris
U.S. Senator



Gary C. Peters
U.S. Senator



Tina Smith
U.S. Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
U.S. Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
U.S. Senator



Maria Cantwell
U.S. Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley

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U.S. Senator

Martha McSally

Martha McSally
U.S. Senator