

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 16, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
United States

Dear President Biden:

We write to respectfully request that you include \$4 billion in homeless assistance grants in your Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) budget, so that our states can make additional progress towards sheltering unhoused people and ending homelessness. Nationwide, nearly 600,000 people experience homelessness on any given night, and around one-third of them are unsheltered: living somewhere unfit for a person, like a car or tent. You have the opportunity to make historic progress towards ending homelessness by investing in Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) and the Continuum of Care (CoC) program with \$4 billion in your FY23 budget. In the strongest, wealthiest nation on earth, we must do more to support, shelter and house our most vulnerable neighbors.

The pandemic has highlighted that the safety net is riddled with holes nationwide, including for housing. Already, only one in four extremely low-income households eligible for rent assistance has access to it. More than two thirds of extremely low-income families pay more than half of their monthly income just to rent —forcing parents to make brutally tough choices about paying the rent or buying food, diapers or prescription drugs. And because, in recent years, construction of new housing has lagged across the United States, there are far fewer affordable homes than there are people who need them.

The unsheltered homeless population and the community service providers who support them need greater federal investment than they have received in recent years. States are stepping up with significant resources to tackle the issue, and recent federal investments have made a difference too: for example, funding from the CARES Act has significantly increased shelter beds capacity nationwide. However, outside of pandemic emergency relief measures, federal funding still has not caught up to demonstrated need. Cuts to federal housing assistance in the 1980s and sequestration cuts of the 2010s, paired with decades-old restrictive local zoning practices reminiscent of redlining, have created a crisis of housing availability, affordability and homelessness. It's long past time that the federal government's policies and budgets reflected that urgency – especially now with the ongoing pandemic – to safely house everyone without a roof over their head.

The impacts of this lack of affordable housing and insufficient federal assistance are undeniable and painful. For example, some schools have rerouted their buses to state parks to pick up students who live, study and play in tents and campers, instead of homes. No child in America should be left to do their homework by a flashlight in the cold. Significant investment in ESG and the CoC program will help house the tens of thousands of unaccompanied young people and veterans, 175,000 people in families and 400,000-plus individual adults who experience

homelessness any given night in the United States by investing in shelter, services and housing. ESG and CoC have contributed to demonstrable progress towards ending homelessness, but the United States must do more to strengthen the safety net for our vulnerable neighbors. We strongly urge you to include \$4 billion in homeless assistance grants through ESG and CoC in your FY23 budget.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Tina Smith  
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



Patty Murray  
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



Alex Padilla  
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator