

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2008

The Honorable John Olver
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing, and Urban Development
Committee on Appropriations
2358-A Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Knollenberg
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing, and Urban Development
Committee on Appropriations
2349 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Olver and Ranking Member Knollenberg:

We are writing to request a funding level of at least \$470 million for the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program for Fiscal Year 2009. As you know, the HOPWA program, which enjoys wide bipartisan support, is the only federal housing program that specifically provides cities and states with the resources to address the housing crisis facing people living with HIV/AIDS.

Despite consistent support from your committee in increasing HOPWA's annual appropriation, the growing demand for services requires a substantial increase this year. The National AIDS Housing Coalition estimates that over \$4.5 billion is required to truly meet the housing needs of all those living with HIV/AIDS. In light of budget realities, however, we ask for \$470 million to help those in the greatest need.

While major strides have been made in treatment options for people living with HIV/AIDS, the cost of these new treatments can often force people to decide between essential medications and necessities such as housing. Individuals with HIV/AIDS must have stable housing to ensure access to, and benefit from, complex drug treatments which often require special dietary needs. Homeless or unstably housed HIV infected persons experience higher viral loads and more hospitalizations than those who are stably housed. Inadequate housing is not only a barrier to treatment, but also puts people with HIV/AIDS at risk of premature death from exposure to other diseases, poor nutrition, stress and lack of medical care.

At any given time, one-third to one-half of all Americans with HIV/AIDS are either homeless or in imminent danger of losing their homes. HOPWA answers this need, successfully providing suitable, reasonably-priced housing for thousands of Americans battling AIDS. HOPWA enables cities and states to design and provide community-based, cost-effective housing for people living with HIV/AIDS and their families. It provides maximum flexibility so that states and communities can implement strategies that respond to local housing needs and shortfalls. In addition, the administrative costs of the program are capped, ensuring the money goes directly to serving people with HIV/AIDS.

In FY 2009 alone, HOPWA funds will support the delivery of housing assistance to over 112,000 households across 50 states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia through competitive and formula grants. Unfortunately, the demand for housing accommodations for people living with HIV/AIDS continues to greatly outweigh the resources currently available.

Recent studies show that people with housing are at a much lower risk of becoming infected with HIV/AIDS. The HOPWA program offers thousands of people living with HIV/AIDS and their families the safety and stability necessary to benefit from drug treatments that have contributed to a dramatic reduction in AIDS mortality in this nation. We therefore urge you to give the highest priority to an allocation of \$470 million for HOPWA in the FY 2009 Transportation-HUD appropriations bill so that this important program may continue to serve those in need.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Arnold Kessler

Joseph Grenley

Maureen Dandridge

Sheila Jackson Lee

Dennis J. Kucinich

Tony Balderr

Bill Delahunt

Ruben Hinojosa

Bill Pasarell

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Michael R. McNulty

George Miller Henry C. Waxman

Donna

Eric L. Engel

Wendell H. Ford

Danny K. Davis

Eleanor H. Norton

Tom. J. [Signature]

Cole E. Gildee

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Amo Van Holt

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[Signature]

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Jack DeLoach
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Wm. Lacy Clay

Al Rosen

Joe Courtney

Jim Langewin

Howard L. Berman

Mark Udall

How on Photo

Delvin L. Watt

Donald M. Payne

Edward J. Markey

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