

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 8, 2019

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

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

Dear Chairman Collins and Ranking Member Reed:

As the Subcommittee begins crafting the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we ask that you provide \$410 million in funding for the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program. This request includes sufficient funds to ensure that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) can adequately enact the updated HOPWA formula and that no jurisdiction loses funding that could leave current HOPWA residents without supportive housing.

Since 1990, HOPWA has been the sole federal housing program dedicated to ensuring states and municipalities can adequately address the needs of their low-income residents living with HIV/AIDS, with nearly half of all these individuals requiring some form of housing-related assistance. The program provides competitive and formula grants to all fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Through these grants, cities and states design and deliver community-based, cost-effective housing and supportive services to people living with HIV/AIDS. Given that housing remains the greatest unmet need for people living with HIV/AIDS, the stable housing opportunities provided by HOPWA grantees is critical to ensuring better health outcomes for those living with HIV and reducing the likelihood that these individuals will need to access emergency and acute care.

We know that HIV does not affect all Americans equally, making the need for HOPWA in certain communities even more important. In fact, 93 percent of HOPWA funds serve extremely-low to very-low-income U.S. households. During the last program year, 10 percent of HOPWA beneficiaries experiencing homelessness were veterans and another 48 percent were considered chronically homeless. The program provided housing assistance to a total of 50,310 households. Further, HOPWA leverages income from local communities. According to HUD, the HOPWA program leveraged over \$908 million from state and local jurisdictions in the last program year alone.

Over the past three decades, the HIV epidemic has undergone a shift from a largely urban epidemic to a silent rural one. Updates to the HOPWA formula enacted by Congress in 2016 are helping ensure that funds go to communities that need it the most and where HIV is most prevalent. However, despite its efficiency and effectiveness, HOPWA remains chronically underfunded. We request an increase of \$17 million in funding above the program's FY 2019 level to ensure no one loses their housing in FY 2020. This modest increase will keep people in their homes and save lives. At a time when many critical programs that individuals with HIV/AIDS strongly rely on are under attack, maintaining stable and secure housing may be the

difference between life and death for many individuals and families around the country. HOPWA has been a critical tool in the lives of so many Americans in their fight against HIV/AIDS. We urge the Committee to fund HOPWA at \$410 million in FY 2020.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

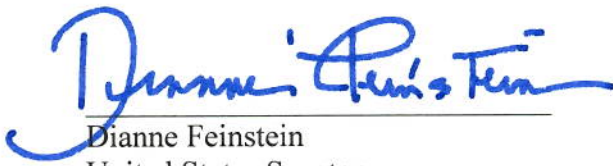
Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



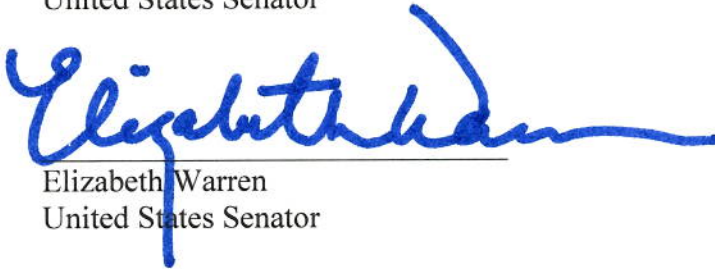
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



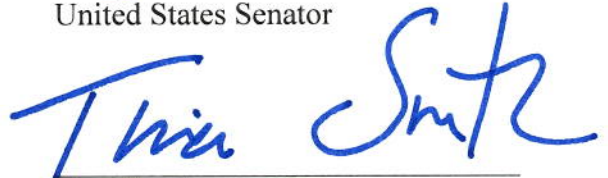
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



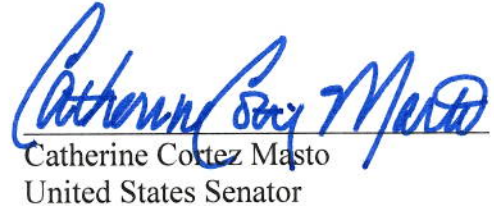
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senate



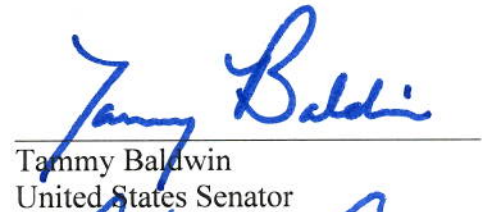
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



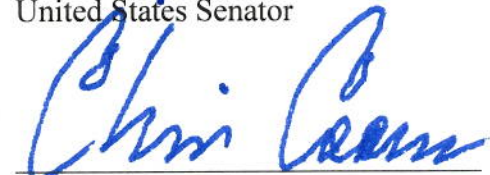
Mazie Hirono
United States Senator



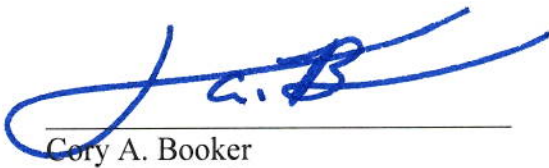
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



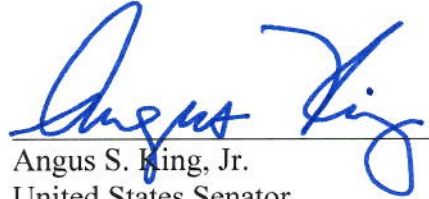
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



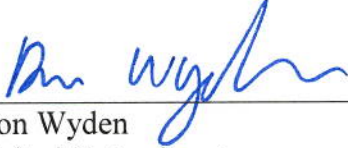
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



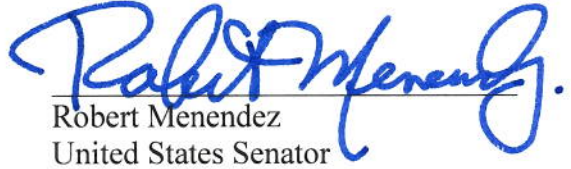
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator




Doug Jones
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



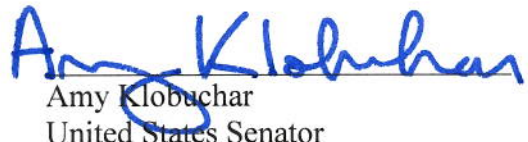
Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Christopher Murphy
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



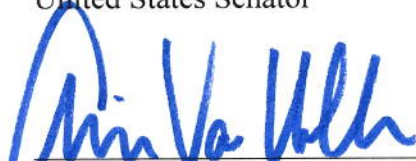
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



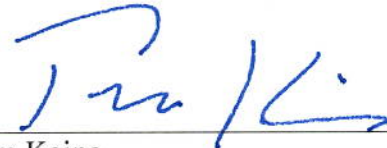
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator




Tim Kaine
United States Senator




Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator