

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 14, 2012

Mr. Jeffrey Zients
Deputy Director for Management
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Deputy Director Zients:

We write to urge you to maintain funding for homelessness programs as you consider discretionary spending cuts for the remainder of the Fiscal Year and plan for the President's budget for Fiscal Year 2014.

The report released on September 14, 2012 by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) estimated that the sequestration would require an 8.2 percent reduction in nonexempt nondefense discretionary funding. These arbitrary across-the-board cuts will have a devastating impact on millions of Americans and will disproportionately affect our most vulnerable populations. While we are working to avoid sequestration and find a bipartisan budget deal by the end of the year, we want to bring to your attention the importance of continued funding of programs that assist the homeless.

Today, on any given night in America, anywhere from 700,000 to 2 million people are homeless. Furthermore, 34 percent of the homeless population is comprised of families with children, and 12 percent are veterans. Millions of Americans are still dealing with the consequences of the housing meltdown that left close to one in four families with a mortgage underwater at the end of 2010. Home foreclosures are at an all-time high, with the foreclosure rate for all loans rising from 1.28 percent in the first quarter of 2007 to 4.39 percent in the first quarter of 2012. In addition, the scarcity of affordable housing in the United States - particularly in urban areas where homelessness is more prevalent - has aggravated the situation. Increased foreclosures, unaffordable housing, and unemployment rates above 8 percent have resulted in higher rates of homelessness.

Now is not the time to cut programs that keep millions of Americans off the streets. In these difficult economic times, Americans deserve our government's support, and it is our responsibility to help those who need it the most. This is why, now more than ever, we must continue to invest in homelessness programs that address the needs of our most vulnerable

individuals and families. Those programs are provided by several agencies and include: the Education for Homeless Children and Youth program, the Emergency Food and Shelter (EFS) program, the Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) program, Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH), the Runaway and Homeless Youth program, Homeless Veterans Reintegration program, Grants for the Benefit of Homeless Individuals, and the Homeless Assistance Grants.

Without adequate funding for those programs, hospitalizations, medical treatments, police interventions, and emergency shelter expenses will dramatically increase. We can both help Americans in need and reduce the cost of homelessness on society by investing in such programs.

Again, we urge your immediate attention to this critically important matter, and thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



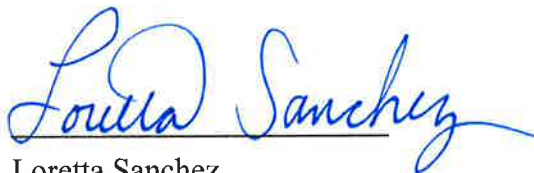
Alcee L. Hastings
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Eddie Bernice Johnson
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Raul Grijalva
Member of Congress



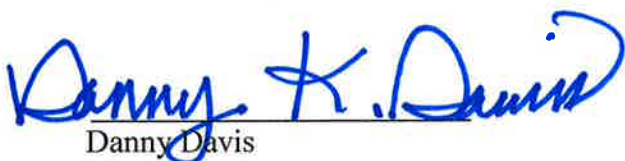
Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress



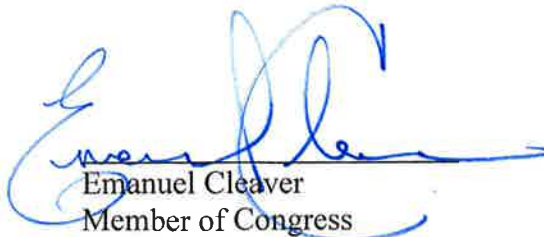
Theodore Deutch
Member of Congress



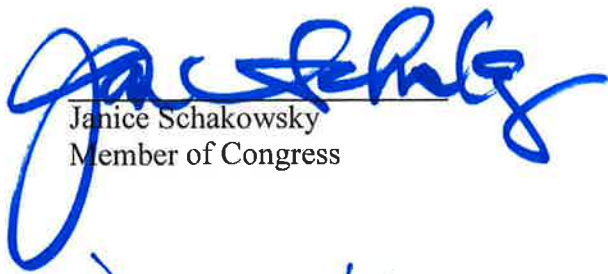
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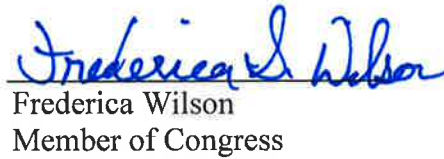
Hansen Clarke
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Corrine Brown
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Yvette Clarke
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Frederica Wilson
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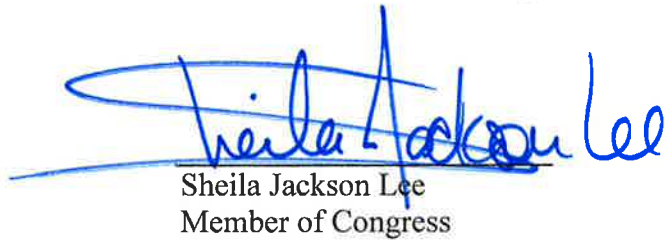


Laura Richardson
Member of Congress


Charles Rangel
Member of Congress



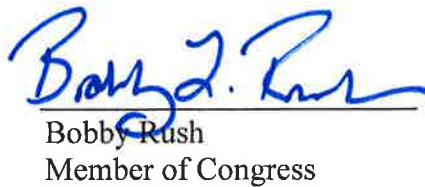
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Sheila Jackson Lee
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Bobby Rush
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William Lacy Clay Jr.
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Eleanor Holmes Norton
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Keith Ellison
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Zoe Lofgren
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Edolphus Towns
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Terri Sewell
Member of Congress

Cc:

The Honorable John Boehner, Speaker, US House of Representatives

The Honorable Harry Reid, Majority Leader, US Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader, US House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader, US Senate

Endorsing organizations: National Coalition for the Homeless, National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, National Health Care for the Homeless Council, National Center on Family Homelessness, National Low Income Housing Coalition, Corporation for Supportive Housing, First Focus Campaign for Children, Lutheran Services in America, and Western Regional Advocacy Project