



Monday, April 27, 2020

Dear Speaker Pelosi and California Congressional Delegation,

The COVID-19 pandemic reveals how critical safe, stable, homes are to our communities' ability to get and stay healthy. We live in interconnected communities, where each person's wellness depends on everyone else's, and we will weather this emergency and prepare for the next by uniting behind policies that ensure all people have access to safe and stable housing.

We, the undersigned organizations from across California, urge you to put into place:

- 1. Sweeping rental/debt relief for all households which are no longer able to pay their rents or mortgages as a result of COVID-19**
- 2. The designation of affordable housing as essential infrastructure in any future Infrastructure Stimulus package.**

The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated our nation's existing housing crisis, even while revealing how critical safe, stable housing is for our communities' health. **People have lost their jobs at a scale rarely seen in American history that is threatening our nation's fundamental ability to keep people housed.** At the same time, it is abundantly clear that housing is one of the most critical tools we have to protect our communities from COVID-19, and the necessary foundation to recovery ahead. To shelter in place, Americans must have shelter. We must take emergency actions to get and keep people in homes to shelter in place during the pandemic.

**Institute sweeping rental/debt relief for all households impacted by COVID**

We strongly urge you to provide additional swift and sweeping rental/debt relief for **all** households which are no longer able to pay rent or mortgages as a result of COVID, and emergency housing investments for those who are currently homeless.

- Support the inclusion of \$100 billion in rental assistance funds in a vehicle that can meet the scale of rent relief needed to provide rent relief to millions of Californians and households nationally who can no longer pay their rents as a result of COVID. It is critical that this relief be made available to all households regardless of immigration status; every person's health depends on everyone else's, and we must ensure all of us can access the care we need. We also request that \$10 billion of this assistance be reserved to support existing affordable housing developments (with break-even rental assistance), so that

affordable housing providers can keep their doors open and their tenants stably housed. Without this rental assistance, many affordable housing providers could be financially insolvent within 60-90 days. Affordable housing providers in the Bay Area are already reporting 15%-20% loss in rental income for rent that was due on April 1<sup>st</sup> with even steeper declines expected in May.

- Establish a \$75 billion homeowner assistance fund for low-income homeowners who can no longer afford to pay their mortgages. We also urge you to provide mortgage and other debt and regulatory relief specifically to non-profit affordable housing owners to support them throughout the crisis. We can ill afford to allow our already insufficient affordable housing stock to be lost due to economic strain.
- Provide \$11.5 billion for Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), and \$3 billion for emergency section 8 vouchers for people experiencing homelessness.
- Congress should implement a national, uniform moratorium on evictions and foreclosures that assures renters will not lose their homes during a pandemic where our collective health depends on each of us staying home. This moratorium should be coupled with sufficient rental assistance to the tenant or debt relief to the property owner to ensure that projects remain financially solvent and tenants stay housed.

Further we urge you to support a federal Infrastructure Stimulus package that invests in communities, jobs, and housing that can restart our economic engine, get people back to work, and lead to a strong and sustainable recovery.

**Designate Affordable Housing as Essential Infrastructure and invest \$500 billion to ensure that everyone has a stable and affordable place to call home**

- Classify subsidized housing as infrastructure and invest \$500 billion to meet the actual need for permanent affordable homes at the national scale, going beyond what was already introduced in H.R. 5187.
- Expand the Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, project-based section 8 vouchers, and the HOME and CDBG programs, as well as new programs that can also be used for the acquisition of homes off of the speculative market so that we can build and preserve the affordable homes Californians and households throughout the country desperately need now and into the future.
- Make existing federal resources dedicated to affordable housing go further by reducing the current tax-exempt bond "50% test" to 25% permanently, this will ensure that states like California can build twice as many affordable homes while using existing resources our state already has available.

Lawmakers must act with the urgency and resources that will ensure that all of our neighbors, no matter their income, race, immigration status, have a place to get and stay healthy in this time of pandemic, and ensure a stable recovery. This health and economic crisis underscores how foundational housing is to the health, equity, and economic success of all Americans and our nation, and exposes the need for Congressional action immediately and ahead. We can no longer tolerate systems and

the status quo that perpetuates the “haves” and the “have nots,” the housed and unhoused. Our goal should not be to put things back to the way things were, but to build the just and sustainable communities we always deserved.

Let us permanently address our vulnerability to COVID and future emergencies with urgent action to end homeless and to address the lack of affordable housing in California and our country. Every person deserves a stable place to live, be safe, and thrive in health and well-being. We invite you to join us and help make it happen.

We thank you for your leadership, commitment and continuing hard work on behalf of all Californians.

Sincerely,

Amie Fishman  
Executive Director  
Non-Profit Housing Association of  
Northern California

Tomiquia Moss  
Executive Director  
All Home

**And the [Undersigned \[Use this link to sign on\]](#),**

Bay Area Community Services (BACS)

Bay Area LISC

Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII)|Rise Together

Blue Sky Center

BRIDGE Housing Corporation

Bonnewit Development Services

Burbank Housing

California Asset Building Coalition

California Coalition for Rural Housing (CCRH)

California Coalition for Youth

Californians for Disability Rights Inc.

California Housing Partnership

California Reinvestment Coalition

California YIMBY

Center for Sustainable Neighborhoods

Charities Housing

Chinatown Community Development Center (CCDC)

CHISPA

Community Arts Stabilization Trust

Community Economics, Inc.

Community Housing Development Corporation (CHDC)

Community Housing Partnership

Compass Family Services

Dempsey Associates

Devine & Gong

Destination:Home

Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians

EAH Housing

East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO)

East Bay Local Asian Development Corporation (EBALDC)

Eden Housing

Generation Housing

Grantland L. Johnson Institute of Leadership Development

Grow The Richmond

Goodwill of San Francisco, San Mateo, and Marin

Habitat for Humanity East Bay/Silicon Valley

Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco

Haight Ashbury Neighbors for Density

Hamilton Families

Hello Housing

Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County (HLC)

Housing Trust Silicon Valley

Homelessness Prenatal Program

Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary/Loretto Sisters

Jamboree Housing

Kevin Carter Poor People's Campaign

Larkin Street Youth Services

Los Angeles LISC

Mercy Housing California

Metropolitan Transportation Commission/Association of Bay Area Governments  
(MTC/ABAG)

MidPen Housing Corp.

Monument Impact

Mutual Housing California

National Alliance on Mental Illness - Sacramento

Neighborly Santa Cruz

North Beach Citizens

North Valley Housing Trust

Organize Sacramento

OWL SacCap

Palo Alto Housing

PATH

Peninsula for Everyone

People for Housing - Orange County YIMBY

PEP Housing

Positive Resource Center

Quantum Housing Corporation

RCAC

Regional Asthma Management and Prevention (RAMP)

Resources for Community Development (RCD)

Rural LISC

Rural Smart Growth Task Force

Sacramento Metro Advocates for Rail and Transit

Sacramento Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO

Sacramento Housing Alliance

Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee

Sacramento Regional Coalition to End Homelessness

Sacred Heart Community Services

Safe Routes Partnership

San Diego LISC

San Francisco Housing Development Corp. (SFHDC)

San Francisco Foundation

San Francisco Housing Action Coalition (SFHAC)/Bay Area Housing Action Coalition (BayHAC)

San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR)

San Francisco YIMBY

Self-Help Enterprises

Silicon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF)

SV@Home

TechEquity Collaborative

Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation (TNDC)

The Core Companies

The John Stewart Company

The Kelsey

The Unity Council

Unite Here! Local 483

United Food & Commercial Workers Local 5

United Latinos, Promoviendo Acción Cívica

Vernazza Wolfe Associates

Volunteers of America National Services

Working Partnerships USA

YIMBY Action

YIMBY Law