



February 2, 2016

Support H.R. 3700, the Housing Opportunities Through Modernization Act

Dear Representative:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, we write to urge you to support H.R. 3700, the Housing Opportunities Through Modernization Act. The bill would make significant improvements to the nation's public and assisted housing programs, which are essential in allowing extremely low-income families and individuals to afford safe and decent homes regardless of their age, race or ethnicity, disability status, or other factors.

H.R. 3700 will streamline the administration of HUD-assisted housing programs while encouraging greater opportunity for extremely low-income families. The legislation addresses several critical opportunity gaps in existing affordable housing programs by increasing safety and habitability; providing greater access to project-based housing; encouraging higher income growth and economic mobility among assisted families; allowing for greater flexibility for families experiencing hardship; and ensuring that families who need housing assistance the most are able to receive it.

While we applaud the significant bipartisan effort that led to today's consideration of H.R. 3700, we do believe further improvements could be made. In particular, we urge you to support the following amendments:

- Representative Maxine Waters' amendment to retain current law related to dependent and child care income deductions;
- Representatives David Price and Robert Aderholt's amendment to update the formula for HUD's Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program;
- Representative Peter Welch's amendment to allow housing choice vouchers to cover costs beyond the rental of the land underneath a manufactured home;
- Representative Terri Sewell's amendment to require HUD to study the impacts of H.R. 3700's income deduction changes on rents paid by people with disabilities, families, and the elderly; and,
- Representative Keith Ellison's amendment to authorize HUD housing providers to report on-time rental payment to credit reporting agencies.

We also urge you to oppose Rep. Steven Palazzo's amendment to permanently exempt all public housing agencies in Mississippi, Iowa, Alaska, and the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles from the requirement to include a resident on their boards of commissioners. Recipients of housing assistance and vouchers have vital input about the

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administration of housing assistance programs and can contribute greatly to their successful management.

Again, we urge you to support H.R. 3700, especially with several of the key improvements outlined above. If you have any questions, please contact either of us, or Senior Counsel Rob Randhava, at (202) 466-3311.

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson
President & CEO



Nancy Zirkin
Executive Vice President