

September 6, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Senate Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing, Development and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing, Development and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs, Vice Chair, and Ranking Member:

The undersigned organizations, which include a broad cross-section of stakeholders committed to enabling low-income children to live in more opportunity-rich neighborhoods, urge Congress to provide robust funding for the Housing Choice Voucher Mobility Demonstration. Specifically, we call on Congress to include in its final Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) appropriations bill for FY 2019 the House provision that provides \$50 million for this demonstration.

A growing body of evidence demonstrates that low-income families with children who move to low poverty areas do better in the long term. By enabling more families with children to use housing vouchers to live in safe, low-poverty neighborhoods with strong schools and access to jobs, this demonstration will help children break out of poverty.

The Housing Choice Voucher Mobility demonstration, which has received near unanimous support in the House of Representatives,¹ represents the best of bipartisan work to disrupt the cycle of intergenerational poverty by empowering low-income families to move to safe neighborhoods with strong schools and access to jobs.

Through this initiative, participating housing agencies will have the means and incentive to provide housing mobility services to inform families with children about the benefits of low-poverty neighborhoods, help identify housing opportunities in those communities, recruit landlords to participate in the program, and support families after they make a move. Agencies will also be encouraged to enhance their operations by collaborating with nearby agencies to remove barriers to housing choices for families. As an incentive for agencies to apply to be part of the demonstration, approximately 2,000 vouchers will be made available for participating families with children. Importantly, the demonstration will evaluate the most effective strategies to help families access strong communities with high-performing schools.

This bill has broad support in Congress and among stakeholders. In addition to its overwhelming support in the House this Congress, it was also funded in the Senate THUD bill in the last Congress but has never been enacted. Families living in poverty should not be asked to wait any longer for Congress to take final action on this bipartisan, commonsense solution that will help break the cycle of poverty.

We urge the Senate to agree to fund the demonstration in the final THUD funding bill.

CC: The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen, Chair, House Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Nita Lowey, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart, Chair, House Appropriations THUD Subcommittee
The Honorable David Price, Ranking Member, House Appropriations THUD Subcommittee

¹ On July 11, 2018, HR 5793, the Housing Choice Voucher Mobility Demonstration Act of 2018, passed the House of Representatives 368-19

Sincerely,

American Civil Liberties Union
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
Children's Defense Fund
Children's HealthWatch
Compass Working Capital
Council of Large Public Housing Authorities
Enterprise Community Partners
Grounded Solutions Network
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
NAACP
National Affordable Housing Management Association
National Alliance of Community Economic
Development Associations
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Apartment Association
National Association of Housing and
Redevelopment Officials

National Coalition for the Homeless
National Council of State Housing Agencies
National Development Council
National Disability Rights Network
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Housing Conference
National Housing Law Project
National Housing Trust
National League of Cities
National Leased Housing Association
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National Multifamily Housing Council
National Network to End Domestic Violence
Poverty & Race Research Action Council
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future