



December 21, 2024

Dear Member of Congress,

With the winter getting colder, as religious denominations, faith-based service providers, and members of the Interreligious Working Group on Domestic Human Needs (DHN), we are compelled to urge you and your colleagues in Congress to provide responsibly robust funding levels for homeless assistance and affordable housing programs in the fiscal year (FY) 25 federal budget to address the present homelessness crisis. We collectively pray this does not get overlooked as funding decisions are made.

Annually on December 21, National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day, we somberly remember those who died while experiencing homelessness over the past year. This coincides with the winter solstice, the coldest and darkest part of the year when people living outside in our country are at the highest risk of dying from treatable health conditions or overdoses.

Our diverse theological teachings call us to love our neighbors and serve those in the greatest need. For generations, houses of worship and faith-based providers have worked hard to act on their faith, providing refuge and care for people facing homelessness. Today, we are providing homeless assistance to meet the full spectrum of our neighbors' needs from prevention to crisis response to supportive housing. We've seen how having a safe place to call home not only saves lives but transforms them by allowing people to shift focus from survival to living out their divine purpose. In the process, community safety and well-being improve for us all.

However, historic lows in the supply of affordable housing, inflation driven by high rents, and the expiration of eviction prevention measures including emergency rental assistance and economic supports like the expanded child tax credit have recently widened the gap between income and housing costs for many. This has resulted in record numbers of people becoming homeless for the first time. Growing threats of natural disasters on people's housing security have compounded this. Our ministries do not have the capacity to solve this national crisis alone. Nor can the crisis be resolved without prioritizing the needs of the vulnerable communities we serve in key policy decisions. Support from the federal government is needed to help us and our partners meet this "all-hands-on-deck" moment.

We hope you will champion robust funding levels for homeless assistance and affordable housing programs in the FY 25 budget and seek ways to address the high costs of housing and prevent evictions. We are committed to putting the federal and other resources we are blessed to steward to good use: providing dignified refuge that gives people the opportunity to feel God's love and access the hope, will, and agency to move forward into brighter chapters.

We pray that we'll have less names to read of those who've died without a home in our memorial services next winter. Thank you for your service and consideration.

Peace be with you.

Alliance of Baptists
Church World Service
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF)
Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
Franciscan Action Network
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Islamic Relief USA
Lutheran Services in America
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Churches
National Council of Jewish Women
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Pax Christi USA
Presbyterian Church (USA) Office of Public Witness
The Salvation Army National Headquarters
The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society
3e Restoration, Inc.
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
United Church of Christ
World Relief

cc: Representatives Cole, DeLauro, Womack, and Quigley

cc: Senators Collins, Murray, Hyde-Smith, and Schatz