



May 15, 2024

Dear Representative X,

With homelessness at a record high, as religious denominations, faith-based service providers, and members of the Interreligious Working Group on Domestic Human Needs (DHN), we urge you and your colleagues in Congress to provide the highest funding levels possible for homeless assistance and affordable housing programs in the fiscal year (FY) 25 federal budget. We appreciate Congress' support in FY24 and collectively pray this is prioritized as funding decisions are made for this fiscal year.

Our diverse theological teachings call us to shelter and serve those in the greatest need. For generations, houses of worship and faith-based providers have worked to provide homeless assistance across the spectrum from crisis response to permanent supportive housing, build affordable housing, and offer services for people struggling with homelessness or at risk of eviction. We've seen how having a safe place to call home empowers people to shift focus from survival to living out God's purpose for their lives.

Recently, historic lows in the supply of affordable housing, inflation and high market-driven rents, and the expiration of pandemic-era aid have resulted in more people becoming homeless. The number of people experiencing homelessness in our nation [increased by 12 percent](#) from 2022 to 2023! This reflects increases across all populations, tragically reversing downward trends for veterans since 2011 and people in families with children since 2012.

State and local jurisdictions across the country are responding to this crisis in diverse ways. Some seek to move or hide people experiencing homelessness via forceful encampment closures, funding transportation to other jurisdictions, and punishments that can lead to jail stays and criminal records. Such approaches add barriers to accessing housing, prolonging the crisis. Other jurisdictions seek to compassionately meet people's basic needs and connect them to housing and supportive services. Such approaches improve community safety for us all.

Responding to the national homelessness crisis with compassion and efficacy is an urgent priority. Courageous leadership and support from the federal government is needed to help us meet the moment. While we are concerned that the discretionary spending cap could endanger critical funding, we pray that you will champion robust funding levels for homeless assistance and affordable housing programs in FY25. This will help equip state and local leaders and their nonprofit and faith-based partners to implement effective, compassionate solutions.

Thank you for your service and consideration.

Peace be with you.

Alliance of Baptists
Church World Service
Disciples Center for Public Witness (Disciples of Christ)
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Franciscan Action Network
National Council of Churches
National Council of Jewish Women
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Presbyterian Church USA Office of Public Witness
Sojourners – Sojo Action
The Episcopal Church
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
United Church of Christ
World Relief

cc: Chair Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Womack, and Ranking Member Quigley