



CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS  
*Michelle Lujan Grisham | Chairwoman*  
115TH CONGRESS

July 31, 2017

The Honorable Benjamin Carson  
Office of the Secretary  
Department of Housing and Urban Development  
451 7<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20410

Dear Secretary Carson:

As members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, we write to share our deep concern about the potential impacts that the fiscal year 2018 budget request for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) would have on low-income Americans and members of our constituencies living in public housing nationwide.

There are over one million households across the nation living in public housing, including low-income seniors, children, people with disabilities, and working families. Approximately 24% of these households, or over 467,000 individuals, identify as Hispanic and/or Latino. Public housing, whether rural or urban, is a central source of housing for the nation's lowest-income families. Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) have committed to working consistently and creatively to preserve this precious resource, but federal funding provided by HUD is the lifeline of public housing across the nation.

The Administration's FY18 HUD budget proposal to cut 68%, an astounding \$1.8 billion, causes us deep concern, especially for the already underfunded public housing capital and operating funds. The public housing program is a critical component of our nation's infrastructure. Without federal dollars, local governments will not be able to shoulder the full costs of our critical housing needs. Due to decades of federal underfunding, public housing infrastructure across the nation has over \$26 billion in unmet capital needs. Now is the time to find solutions to preserve, not further disinvest in, public housing.

The proposed cuts to the HUD budget would force PHAs to halt capital repair work, directly diminishing the quality of life for residents and health outcomes of these populations. As you have mentioned, the health impacts of aging infrastructure, including asthma and respiratory illness, are significant public health concerns for public housing residents throughout the nation. Hispanic and Latino, Black, Asian, and/or low-income families are more likely to live in substandard housing and polluted communities, increasing the risk of childhood lead poisoning, asthma, cancer, and other environmentally-related diseases. In addition to being disproportionately affected by disease, people of color often lack adequate insurance and access to health care due to financial barriers. Research shows that stable, healthy housing can have a positive impact on population health. When proper investments are made, public housing agencies have demonstrated that they are able to improve the health and wellbeing of their residents.

We can avoid negative public health outcomes by ensuring robust funding for critical public housing capital. We must also ensure that local governments have strong partnerships with HUD to preserve federal housing infrastructure across the nation. We urge you to prioritize increased funding for the public housing capital fund in FY18 and to target these resources to address critical health in public housing

facilities. We believe that, with HUD's partnership and robust funding, we can protect low-income households in public housing for years to come.

Sincerely,



Adriano Espallat  
CHC Transportation, Infrastructure and  
Housing Task Force Chairman



Michelle Lujan Grisham  
CHC Chairwoman



Joaquin Castro  
CHC First-Vice Chair



Ruben Gallego  
CHC Second-Vice Chair



Norma J. Torres  
Member of Congress



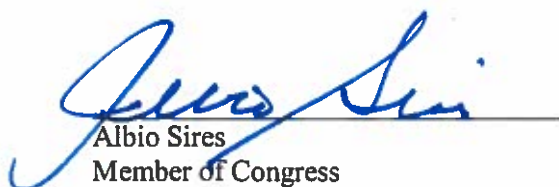
Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



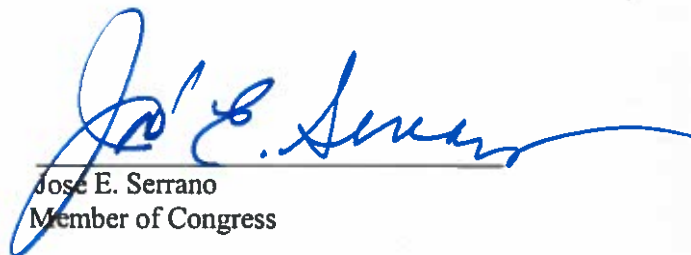
Nydia M. Velázquez  
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Ruben Kihuen  
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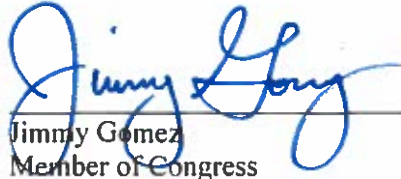
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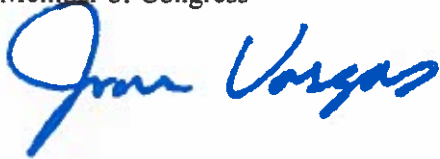
Jim Costa  
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