



December 17, 2015

Dear Representative/Senator,

The National Housing Conference (NHC) thanks all of the members of Congress who worked to develop the bipartisan omnibus appropriations and tax extenders packages. Although no legislation of this size is ever perfect, the two packages together do much to sustain and strengthen affordable housing work for people in communities nationwide. We urge you and your colleagues to support both packages.

The National Housing Conference represents a diverse membership of housing stakeholders including mortgage bankers, real estate professionals, tenant advocates, nonprofit and for-profit home builders, property managers, policy practitioners, equity investors and more, all of whom share a commitment to safe, decent and affordable housing for all in America. We are the nation's oldest housing advocacy organization, dedicated to the affordable housing mission since our founding in 1931. We are a nonpartisan, 501(c)3 nonprofit that brings together our broad-based membership to advocate on housing issues.

The bipartisan compromise that replaced the sequester caps allowed this omnibus to sustain rental assistance, public housing, project-based rental contracts and rural housing programs, among many other HUD and USDA programs whose vital support allows millions of Americans to have a place to call home. The role of housing in determining one's life outcomes cannot be understated; it affects everything from health and educational attainment to job opportunities and the ability to save for the future.

A previous version of the Senate THUD bill proposed cutting the HOME program to \$66 million from \$900 million, only 7% of last year's level. Such low funding would have effectively ended the HOME program, which has produced more than 1.1 million affordable homes over 20 years. The omnibus bill includes \$950 million of funding for the HOME program, meaning this locally directed housing help will continue to create new housing, preserve existing housing and assist renters and homeowners next year.

The tax extenders package similarly ensures continuation of essential housing investments. For rental housing and community development, it makes the 9% minimum credit rate for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit permanent and extends for five years the New Markets Tax Credit. For homeowners, it extends for one year the Mortgage Debt Relief Act, which helps struggling homeowners avoid foreclosure and resolve mortgage debt.

We hope that the bipartisan spirit will continue through to passage of both the omnibus appropriations and the tax extenders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Chris Estes'.

Chris Estes
President and CEO