April 4, 2014

The Honorable Patty Murray, Chairwoman
The Honorable Susan Collins, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Member Collins:

We are writing to express our support for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program. In these challenging budgetary times, it is important to maintain our commitment to successful programs that contribute to the economic health and security of our communities. We thank you for your past support of this vital program and urge the Subcommittee to maintain the federal government’s commitment to community development programs by providing $1.2 billion for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program for Fiscal Year 2015.

HOME has borne a disproportionate share of recent federal budget cuts, seeing its total funding reduced by roughly 38 percent since 2011, which has real and serious consequences for families and communities. The HOME program serves as the largest federal block grant program to state and local governments designed exclusively to produce affordable housing for low-income families. Since Congress created the program it has been the cornerstone in the United States’ affordable housing finance system. HOME provides a flexible resource to meet communities’ highest priority affordable housing needs. At a time when states continue to face significant affordable housing shortages, the program has helped produce more than one million affordable homes nationally and helps approximately 143,000 families secure affordable housing each year. Funding for the HOME program has also successfully leveraged more than $109 billion of public and private funds for affordable housing. Additionally, a funding level of $1.2 billion for the HOME program would create or preserve approximately 21,600 jobs.

HOME resources are used effectively and responsibly and continue to provide much needed funds to local communities for tenant-based rental assistance, rehabilitation of affordable rental and ownership housing, and construction of affordable housing. Additionally, the HOME program provides down-payment assistance to help creditworthy families become homeowners, and housing vouchers to low income families and those on the brink of homelessness. HOME funds often assist seniors, persons with disabilities and the homeless in ways which directly respond to local priorities and needs.

As communities continue to face devastating affordable housing shortages and the need for affordable housing continues to grow, for many states and local governments HOME is the only reliable funding for affordable and special needs housing development available. Despite the growing need for HOME funds this program has faced significant cuts in recent years. In light of these drastic cuts, communities have struggled to continue their programs and have
discontinued critical projects for low- and moderate-income persons. Therefore, we ask you to maintain critical support for the HOME program in the Fiscal Year 2015 Transportation-Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations bill. We thank you for your consideration of our request and look forward to working with you on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Patrick Leahy

Christopher A. Coons

Jeanne Shaheen

Sheldon Whitehouse

Kirsten E. Gillibrand

Mazie K. Hirono

Amy Klobuchar

Elizabeth Warren

Brian Schatz

Carl Levin

Tom Harkin

Dianne Feinstein

John D. Rockefeller IV

Debbie Stabenow
Barbara Boxer

Jeff Merkley

Ron Wyden

Joe Manchin III

Edward J. Markey

Benjamin L. Cardin

Tim Kaine

Richard Blumenthal

Bernard Sanders

Sherrod Brown

Richard J. Durbin

Mary L. Landrieu

Charles E. Schumer

Angus S. King, Jr.

Al Franken

Tammy Baldwin