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

March 18, 2016

Dear Chairwoman Collins and Ranking Member Reed,

We write to you to express our strong support for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME). Especially during 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 affordable housing program and urge the Subcommittee to provide $1.2 billion for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program for Fiscal Year 2017.

The HOME program serves as the only federal block grant program for state and local governments designed exclusively to produce affordable housing for low-income families. Since 1992, the HOME program has created more than one million affordable homes and helped provide direct rental assistance to over 270,000 low-income families. The program provides a flexible resource to meet communities' highest priority affordable housing needs. HOME resources are used 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 helps to provide housing vouchers to low-income families and those on the brink of homelessness. The program also has an exceptionally broad reach, serving urban, suburban, and rural communities and providing vital resources for seniors, persons with disabilities, the homeless, and veterans.

In addition to this extensive impact, the HOME program is also cost effective. According to HUD data, each HOME dollar leverages more than four dollars in other public and private resources. The HOME funds are frequently used to provide the critical gap financing that makes rental housing funded with other federal, state, or local housing projects feasible. Funding for the HOME program has successfully leveraged more than $120 billion of additional public and private funds for affordable housing.

The need for funding for affordable housing has never been greater, but despite this gap, funding for HOME has fallen dramatically. Over the last several years, HOME funding has been cut nearly in half, from $1.8 billion in 2010 to $950 million in 2016. These reductions have real and serious consequences for families in need. As communities have struggled to continue their affordable housing programs, they have been forced to discontinue critical projects for low- and moderate-income persons.
For many states and local governments, HOME is the only reliable funding for affordable and special needs housing development available. As communities continue to face devastating affordable housing shortages and the need for affordable housing continues to grow, HOME funds are in high demand.

Given the important need for affordable housing and the great benefits that HOME provides, we urge you to provide critical support for HOME in the Fiscal Year 2017 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. We thank you for your consideration of our request, and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

Patrick Leahy
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator
Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

Brian Schatz  
United States Senator

Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator

Tom Udall  
United States Senator

Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

Jon Tester  
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator