

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 12, 2005

## **SUPPORT THE HOPWA PROGRAM** *Sign the Letter to the Appropriations Committee*

Dear Colleague:

We are writing to ask you to join us in sending the attached letter to the Appropriations Committee urging a funding level of \$385 million for the Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) program for Fiscal Year 2006. HOPWA, which enjoys wide bipartisan support, is the only federal housing program that specifically provides cities and states hardest hit by the AIDS epidemic with the resources to address the housing crisis facing people living with AIDS.

Advances in treatment have offered new hope to people living with HIV/AIDS, but the costs associated with these treatments often force people to decide between essential medications and other necessities, such as housing. HOPWA answers this need, providing affordable housing to thousands of Americans battling AIDS. Unfortunately, last year's appropriation of \$282 million was \$13 million less than the FY04 allocation, and the President's budget calls for even further cuts to the HOPWA program. With 91% of HOPWA recipients having a family income of less than \$1000 per month, these are cuts the program and those it assists simply cannot afford.

Locally controlled, HOPWA provides maximum flexibility to states and communities to design and implement strategies that respond to local housing needs. In FY2005 alone, HOPWA funds will support the delivery of services to roughly 80,000 households in 122 jurisdictions across 39 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. Please join us in sending the following letter to the Appropriations Committee requesting that this program be adequately funded to meet the growing needs of those living with HIV and AIDS.

If you have any questions, or you would like to sign on to the letter, please contact Elissa Levin in Senator Durbin's office at 224-2152 or Reagan McKee in Senator Martinez's office at 224-3041 by April 20, 2005.

Sincerely,

  
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Senator Richard J. Durbin

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Senator Mel Martinez

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April XX, 2005

The Honorable Christopher Bond  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation,  
Treasury, the Judiciary, HUD, and  
Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
Dirksen Senate Office Building Room 130  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation,  
Treasury, the Judiciary, HUD, and  
Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
Dirksen Senate Office Building Room 128  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Bond and Ranking Member Murray:

We are writing to request a funding level of at least \$385 million for the Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) program for Fiscal Year (FY) 2006. As you know, the HOPWA program enjoys wide bipartisan support as the only federal housing program that specifically provides cities and states with the resources to address the housing crisis facing people living with AIDS.

The growing demand for services requires a substantial increase this year. The National AIDS Housing Coalition estimates that more than \$2 billion is required to truly meet the housing needs of all those living with HIV/AIDS. In light of budget realities, however, we ask for \$385 million to help those in the greatest need.

Major strides have been made in treatment options for people living with HIV/AIDS, and with these advances, there is new hope for everyone touched by the AIDS epidemic. However, the cost of these new treatments can often force people to decide between essential medications and other necessities, such as housing. Individuals with HIV/AIDS must have stable housing to ensure access to and to benefit from complex drug treatments that often include special dietary restrictions. In addition, medications often must be refrigerated and taken on a rigid time schedule. Inadequate housing is not only a barrier to treatment, but also puts people with HIV/AIDS at risk of premature death from exposure to other diseases, poor nutrition, stress and lack of medical care. At any given time, one-third to one-half of all Americans with AIDS are either homeless or in imminent danger of losing their homes. HOPWA answers this need, successfully providing suitable, reasonably priced housing for thousands of Americans battling AIDS.

HOPWA enables cities and states to design and provide community-based, cost-effective housing for people living with AIDS and their families. It provides maximum flexibility to states and communities to implement strategies that respond to local housing needs and shortfalls. In

addition, the administrative costs of the program are capped, ensuring the money goes directly to serving people with AIDS.

In FY2005 alone, HOPWA funds will support the delivery of services to more than 80,000 households in 122 jurisdictions across 39 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. Unfortunately, the demand for housing accommodations for people living with HIV/AIDS continues to greatly outweigh the resources currently available.

The HOPWA program offers thousands of people living with HIV/AIDS and their families the safety and stability necessary to benefit from drug treatments that have contributed to a dramatic reduction in AIDS mortality in this nation. We urge you to give the highest priority to an allocation of \$385 million for HOPWA in the FY2006 Transportation, Treasury, Judiciary, HUD Appropriations bill so that this important program may continue to serve those in need.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,