



## *Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development*

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April 21, 2010

Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation,  
Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Olver:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I urge you to support full funding of the Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly and Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities programs in fiscal year 2011. These programs have provided critically needed resources to help develop supportive and affordable living communities for our country's poorest seniors and people with disabilities.

The Catholic community provides housing and supportive services in cities, towns, and places throughout the United States. A study done for Catholic Charities USA in 2008 found that in 2007 nearly 800,000 people were provided housing by Catholic agencies across the country with 19 percent of those served being elderly. Most of the senior housing provided were Section 202 units.

Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly program serves 300,000 seniors, with an estimated 10 seniors waiting for every Section 202 unit that becomes available. This essential program serves seniors who have very-low incomes and few housing options; neither market rate housing nor housing built solely with tax credits meet their needs. Seniors have come to rely on our nation's affordable housing programs and Congress created Section 202 housing specifically to provide supportive housing options for our seniors where they could age in place. Without this specific housing option poor seniors will face homelessness, substandard housing, inappropriate and premature placement in nursing homes, or having to choose between paying for housing or other basic needs.

The Obama administration seeks to suspend capital funding for Section 202 and 811 while reforms are made to the programs. Any changes to the programs, most of which are administrative rather than legislative, most certainly could be done while still maintaining funding. Also, the construction and rehabilitation of these units provide much needed jobs and economic activity in these communities.

I urge you to support full funding of \$825 million for the Section 202 program and \$300 million for Section 811, including \$582 million and \$186 million respectively for the development of new affordable, supportive housing for very low-income households.

A safe, decent, and affordable place to live is the most basic of human needs and has become increasingly more difficult for our seniors and people with disabilities to attain.

With every best wish, I am,

Sincerely,

Most Rev. William F. Murphy  
Bishop of Rockville Centre  
Chairman, Domestic Justice and Human Development Committee