



Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development

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July 11, 2011

Committee on Financial Services
Subcommittee on Capital Markets and Government Sponsored Enterprises
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I write to express concern with efforts to eliminate the National Housing Trust Fund, and in opposition to provisions included in H.R. 2441 that would do so.

Catholic tradition teaches affordable and decent housing is a human right. For the past decade, the Catholic bishops have supported the National Housing Trust Fund because it could be a powerful tool in advancing this right. In 2008, Congress created the National Housing Trust Fund because it also recognized the importance of providing communities with resources to build, preserve, and rehabilitate affordable housing units for extremely low-income households. Unfortunately, three years later this important tool remains unused, and the state of housing security for poor and vulnerable people and families has deteriorated further.

Instead of funding the Trust Fund, provisions in HR 2441 would destroy this essential tool for providing housing security to extremely low-income individuals and families. I would urge the Committee instead to consider ways to assist low-income individuals and increase the availability of affordable housing in the midst of rising demand.

In their 2002 reflection on poverty entitled, *A Place at the Table*, the Catholic bishops of the United States stated, “government has a positive role because of its responsibility to serve the common good, provide a safety net for the vulnerable, and help overcome discrimination and ensure equal opportunity for all. Government has inescapable responsibilities toward those who are poor and vulnerable, to ensure their rights and defend their dignity.”

I urge you to give priority to the most vulnerable among us and provide funding for the National Housing Trust Fund, rather than eliminate it.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend Stephen E. Blaire
Chairman
Committee on Domestic Justice and Human
Development