

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4502

May 10, 2016

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Chairman  
The Honorable Sherrod Brown, Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee  
534 Dirksen Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Brown:

I write to urge the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee to promptly consider the Housing Opportunities Through Modernization Act (H.R.3700). This bipartisan compromise legislation will make incremental steps in reforming our federal housing programs, and was overwhelmingly approved by the House of Representatives in a 427-0 vote on February 2, 2016.

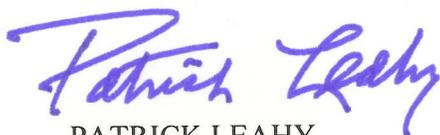
As we continue to recover from the housing crash of 2007, the country faces tremendous housing needs as it strives to deliver benefits to veterans, low-income families, seniors and people with disabilities. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development faces difficult budget pressures, particularly with rental assistance programs that require significant increase in federal investment and administration to meet a growing demand. Affordable housing shortages affect communities in Vermont and all across the country, and for many states and local governments, Housing Choice Vouchers remain one of the only reliable funding sources for serving a high-need population. Meanwhile, our federal housing programs have laid dormant without legislative reform since 1998, crippling the ability of our federal agencies and communities to effectively respond to the housing crises of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The Housing Opportunities Through Modernization Act is a necessary and effective mechanism to streamline and apply reforms to our federal housing programs that will reduce costs, ease administrative burden for housing agencies, encourage employment, reduce homelessness, and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans. The risk of overlooking this potential for progress puts our federal housing partners, communities and families at even greater risk, as the need for public housing continues to rise.

A coalition of 37 national organizations have pledged support for H.R. 3700, recognizing it as a critical step forward for rural and urban communities alike. Housing providers nationwide are committed to supporting the proposed reforms to achieve our goal of ensuring all Americans have a prosperous future.

I respectfully request that you consider this legislation in recognition of the overwhelming support from these advocates and our bipartisan colleagues in the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,



PATRICK LEAHY  
United States Senator