

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 26, 2017

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Brian Schatz
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Schatz:

As the Senate Appropriations Committee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies considers the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Appropriations bill, we respectfully request the Subcommittee provide robust funding for the Supporting Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program, the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program, and case management and supportive services as administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) under the Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program.

In November 2016, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the Interagency Council on Homelessness released the 2016 Point-in-Time Count showing there were 39,471 homeless veterans across the country on a given night. Although this is a decline of about fifty percent since 2009, having even a single veteran experiencing homelessness is one too many. We must continue our diligence and commitment if we are to end veteran homelessness in our country once and for all.

The SSVF, GPD, and HUD-VASH programs are central to federal efforts to ending veteran homelessness. These unique programs support communities across the nation providing critical services and housing for veterans and their families.

Through the SSVF program, VA awards grants in all fifty states to non-profit organizations assisting low-income veterans and their families living in or transitioning to permanent housing. Grantees offer eligible veteran families with case management and assistance in obtaining VA and other benefits, including: health care services, daily living services, personal financial planning services, legal services, housing counseling services, among others. In FY 2016, SSVF served nearly 150,000 veterans and their families in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. According to VA's National Center on Homelessness, of those discharged from the SSVF program, eighty-four percent obtained permanent housing.

The VA's GPD Program provides grants to public entities or nonprofit organizations offering services and transitional housing to homeless veterans. The program includes two primary sources of funding: capital and per diem grants. Capital grants are awarded to entities that remodel, acquire, construct, or expand facilities that serve as veteran service centers or transitional housing. The per diem portion pays organizations for the housing and services provided to veterans at a fixed dollar rate. According to VA, nearly 14,000 beds nationwide served more than 25,000 veterans in 2016 allowing more than 16,500 veterans to exit transitional housing and enter into permanent housing. As such, the GPD Program remains a key component in the fight to end veteran homelessness.

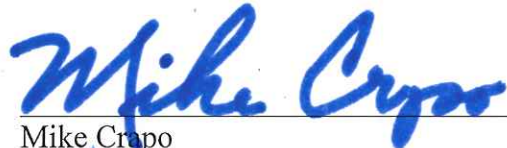
HUD-VASH is the largest supportive permanent housing program in our country combining HUD's Housing Choice rental assistance vouchers with VA case management and supportive services. Some of these services include a full range of medical, mental health, and employment services to veterans within their. Since 2008, more than 79,000 vouchers have been awarded, and according to HUD on November 17, 2016, approximately 111,000 formerly homeless veterans were in homes due to HUD-VASH.

We understand the difficult decisions the Subcommittee faces in the current budget environment. However, the need for programs that support homeless veterans remains great. As we work towards the goal of ending veteran homelessness, providing sufficient funding to the SSVF, GPD, and HUD-VASH programs will allow for continued momentum and progress toward ending veteran homelessness. Thank you for your consideration of this request and your support of our nation's veterans and their families.

Sincerely,



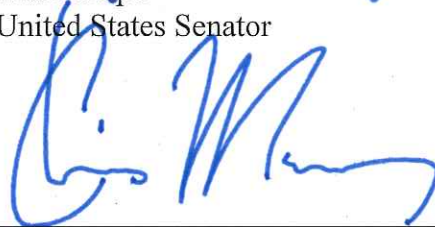
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Mike Crapo
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



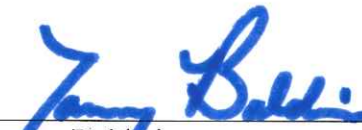
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



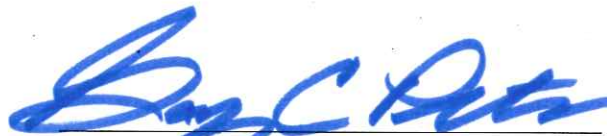
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
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Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



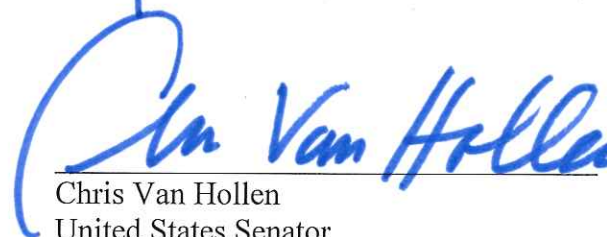
Al Franken
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



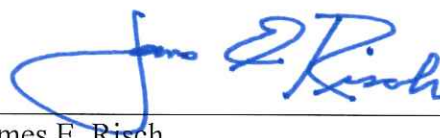
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



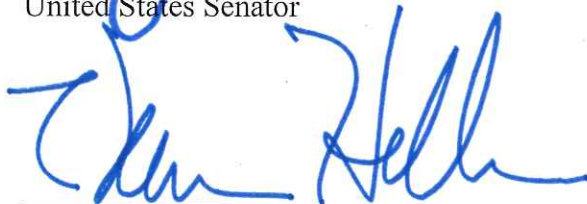
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



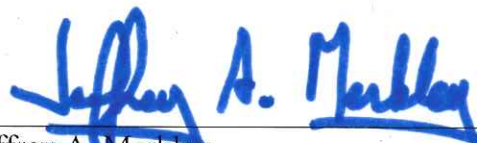
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United States Senator



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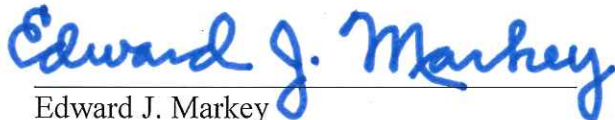
Martin Heinrich
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Cory A. Booker
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Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



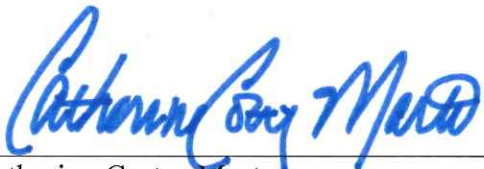
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



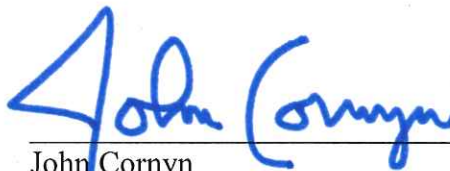
Thom Tillis
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator