



Dear Members of the New Jersey Congressional Delegation,

For too long, the critical importance of safe, decent, affordable homes has been overlooked in Washington, DC. Rental housing affordability has worsened dramatically over the past 15 years, and more American families than ever are struggling to pay the rent and make ends meet. For those earning the least, the problem is most acute: roughly 10 million households with extremely low incomes are either homeless or pay unaffordable rental costs that force many of them to make impossible choices between paying the rent and paying for heat, food, medications, transportation, and other necessities. Research demonstrates that when people have stable affordable homes, lives dramatically improve. We are healthier. Our children do better in school. Our families are less hungry. We can more readily escape poverty and climb the income ladder. Economic productivity is stronger. And our nation is more just and equitable.

We the undersigned organizations believe in the mission of the [Opportunity Starts at Home](#) campaign, an unprecedented multi-sector campaign, to address the housing needs of our most vulnerable neighbors. We believe that more robust and equitable federal housing policies will help create more affordable opportunities and allow our nation to thrive.

We are not alone in our call to action. The campaign recently commissioned a national public opinion poll to assess people's opinions and perspectives on issues related to housing affordability. The polling revealed that the vast majority of Americans (85%) believe that ensuring everyone has a safe, decent, affordable place to live should be a "top national priority." This view is strong across the political spectrum – from 95% of Democrats agreeing it should be a top national priority to 87% of independents to 73% of Republicans. Eight in ten Americans also say that both the president and Congress should "take major action" to make homes more affordable for residents struggling to make ends meet.

Congress must take bold action to provide housing stability and opportunity for millions of people. Therefore, we respectfully urge you to commit to working with us by cosponsoring the following:

1. Expand the **National Housing Trust Fund** to at least \$3.5 billion annually in GSE comprehensive housing finance reform legislation.
2. Create an "**Emergency Assistance Fund**" to provide short-term financial assistance and stability services to help vulnerable households overcome an economic shock that threatens their housing stability.
3. Create 500,000 new "**Opportunity Vouchers**" to enable low income families move into choice communities with greater opportunities.

4. Endorse **S.1772/H.R. 3211** to create a bipartisan Affordable Housing Task Force to deeply study the country's housing affordability challenges in a bipartisan way and to jointly articulate robust solutions.

Please contact Arnold Cohen at [acohen@hcdnnj.org](mailto:acohen@hcdnnj.org)/973-517-3296 or Staci Berger at [sberger@hcdnnj.org](mailto:sberger@hcdnnj.org)/732-406-7604 if you would like to become a cosponsor on any of the above. We look forward to working with you to help make homes more affordable and stable for our friends, family and neighbors.

Sincerely,

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