

September 10, 2021

Senator Mike Crapo
239 Dirksen Senate Building
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Crapo,

On behalf of the Idaho Asset Building Network and the undersigned organizations, we respectfully submit this letter to urge you to support robust investments in housing in the infrastructure and economic recovery package to ensure every Idahoan has access to a safe and affordable home. You have the opportunity to make historic investments in housing by supporting the inclusion of the following policy priorities in the budget resolution:

- 1. \$180 billion for rental assistance through the Housing Choice Voucher Program;**
- 2. \$45 billion for the national Housing Trust Fund to build and preserve homes affordable to people with modest incomes; and**
- 3. \$70 billion to repair public housing.**

Idaho families continue to struggle finding affordable places to live due to the combination of rapidly increasing rental prices outpacing wage growth and a statewide shortage of affordable homes. Rents in Idaho increased by 33 percent since the beginning of the pandemic, and 42 of Idaho's counties do not have a sufficient supply of affordable and available homes for renters with modest incomes. When families lack access to affordable homes, they are forced to spend more than 30 percent of their household's income on rent, leaving little left over for other expenses such as health care services, medications, nutritious food, daycare, or other necessities that keep their families happy and healthy. Robust investments in housing are needed now more than ever to ensure Idahoans have access to safe and stable housing.

Housing Choice Vouchers help families access a modest home in the private market by paying the difference between what households can afford to pay for rent and rent itself. This program helped assist 7,603 Idaho households during Fiscal Year 2018, but still only one in four eligible families could access assistance, and the average applicant waited 27 months before receiving a voucher. Applicants in southwestern Idaho experience the longest wait – with the average wait taking almost 5 years. Investing more funding into this program will help ensure every eligible household with the greatest need is able to access this form of rental assistance.

Research shows that Housing Choice Vouchers are highly effective at reducing homelessness, housing instability, and overcrowding and improve other outcomes for families and children. Children living in affordable homes enjoy better health, are less likely to be food insecure, and do better in school. Further, families with modest incomes are able to climb the income ladder when they have access to affordable homes in high-opportunity neighborhoods, as it gives them access to quality education, higher paying jobs and public transportation.

Idaho is currently facing a shortage of over 22,000 available and affordable homes across the state. Investing into the national Housing Trust Fund will promote the creation and preservation of affordable homes and incentivize Idaho developers to build more affordable homes across our state. We ask for your

support in championing these policies in the federal budget to create more housing opportunities for Idaho families and individuals.

Thank you for your time and dedicated service to the state of Idaho.

Sincerely,

Kendra Knighten, Policy Associate
Idaho Asset Building Network



Christa Rowland, Director of Community Impact
United Way of Treasure Valley



Rebecca Lemmons
Saint Alphonus Health System



Zoe Ann Olson, Executive Director
Intermountain Fair Housing Council



Anna Almerico, Director
Idaho Out-of-School Network



Bill Maikranz, President & CEO
United Way of South Central Idaho



Gayle Woods
Idaho Interfaith Roundtable Against
Hunger



Ali Rabe, Executive Director
Jesse Tree of Idaho



Anna Guida, Program Manager
Empower Idaho



Jami Davis
Idaho State Independent Living Council



Christine Pisani, Executive Director
Idaho Council on Developmental
Disabilities



Denice Caruzzi, President
Boise Homeless Coalition



Amy Wuest, Community Resources
Director
United Way of Southeastern Idaho



Larry Riley
St. Vincent de Paul North Idaho



Gary E. Hanes
Gary E. Hanes & Associates, LLC



Karen Vauk, President and CEO
The Idaho Foodbank



Evie Scrivner
Community Action Partnership of Idaho



Deanna Watson
Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority

