



*For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities*

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The Honorable Maxine Waters, Chair, House Committee on Financial Services
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick McHenry, Ranking Member
House Committee on Financial Services
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Waters, and Ranking Member McHenry:

For over 70 years, The Arc of the United States has been at the forefront of the fight for the civil rights and inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. The Arc advocates for and serves people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), including Down syndrome, autism, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, cerebral palsy, and other diagnoses. The Arc has a network of over 600 chapters across the country promoting and protecting the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supporting their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes and without regard to diagnosis.

Access to affordable and accessible housing is a key issue for people with disabilities and their families. Approximately 4.8 million ([Priced Out - TAC \(tacinc.org\)](#)) non-institutionalized people with disabilities who rely on federal monthly Supplemental Security Income (SSI) have incomes averaging only about \$9,156 per year – low enough to be priced out of every rental housing market in the nation.

About half of adults — and two-thirds of veterans — living in homeless shelters reported having a disability in 2018. Over three-quarters of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, which has increased sharply in recent years ([More Housing Vouchers Needed to Help Disabled People Afford Homes in the Community | Center on Budget and Policy Priorities \(cbpp.org\)](#)), report having a physical or mental health condition. People of color are also disproportionately represented among people experiencing homelessness. Black households account for 12% of all households, yet they account for 26% of all extremely low-income renters, 40% of people experiencing homelessness, and more than half of all homeless families.

Achieve with us.

We welcome the opportunity to provide input to the Committee on “A Strong Foundation: How housing is the Key to Building Back a Better America.” We know that, like us, you are concerned about the millions of individuals and families who continue to experience the perilousness of housing instability, eviction, and homelessness. In that spirit, we urge you to prioritize **robust investments in the Build Back Better Act for housing vouchers, public housing, and the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF)** because these vital housing programs most directly and effectively serve the lowest income and most marginalized households with the greatest needs. All three will be essential to support an equitable recovery.

With your leadership, we can help end the affordable housing crisis by bringing to scale proven solutions, which, to be effective, must include both additional housing vouchers and measures to build and rehabilitate affordable and accessible housing for people with the lowest incomes. In the Build Back Better Act, we will have the rare opportunity to advance bold, transformative housing solutions that are urgently needed today and will pay dividends for years to come. To help end the affordable rental housing and homelessness crisis, we recommend:

- **Expanding rental assistance by \$90 billion to serve an additional one million households.** Vouchers are more effective at reducing homelessness, overcrowding, and housing instability than any other policy option and are integral to any strategy to solve the affordable housing crisis and advance an equitable recovery.
- **Investing \$80 billion to repair the nation’s public housing infrastructure for more than two million residents.** Home to 900,000 households—mostly seniors, women, and people with disabilities—public housing is in dire need of increased federal investment. Because of divestment by Congress, 10,000 public housing units are lost each year to disrepair, and a large backlog of unmet renovation needs places the health and safety of residents at risk. These resources would enable housing agencies to make critical repairs, such as fixing leaky roofs and replacing outdated heating systems, that would improve living conditions for residents and preserve this essential part of the nation’s affordable housing infrastructure for the future.
- **Investing \$37 billion in the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF) to build and preserve 330,000 affordable homes and help end homelessness.** The HTF is the first new federal housing resource in a generation exclusively targeted to build and preserve rental homes affordable to people with the lowest incomes. By doing so, the HTF is *the* federal housing production tool most targeted to address the underlying cause of the housing crisis. Other federal production programs, on their own, are not enough to build homes affordable to people living in poverty. To expand the supply of housing affordable to the lowest income renters, the President included robust funding for the HTF in his plan. The majority of these funds — at least \$26 billion — should be set aside to develop permanent supportive housing as part of efforts to end homelessness for people with disabilities.

We urge you to use this opportunity to invest in critical and proven housing solutions to address the underlying, systemic causes of the housing and homelessness crisis in the United States. Please let me know if we can provide further information. My direct dial is 202-534-3728, and my email is ponder@thearc.org.

Sincerely,

/S/

Carlean Ponder
Director of Disability Rights and Housing Policy

CC: Members of the House Committee on Financial Services