

# JUSTICE IN AGING

FIGHTING SENIOR POVERTY THROUGH LAW

October 22, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
2468 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
1236 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 201515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of Justice in Aging, I write to ask that you keep critical investments in housing within the reconciliation legislation to enact President Biden's Build Back Better Plan.

We know that you are eager to immediately and proactively address the nation's housing affordability crisis and its devastating impact on people. 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 the proposed \$327 billion investment in housing vouchers, public housing, and the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF) in any infrastructure package. These vital housing programs most directly and effectively serve the lowest income renters with the greatest needs. All three investments are essential to build on the temporary housing relief measures in the American Rescue Plan and support an equitable recovery.

Justice in Aging is a national organization that uses the power of law to fight senior poverty by securing access to affordable health care, housing and economic security for older adults with limited resources. We focus our efforts on fighting for people who have been marginalized and excluded from justice, such as women, people of color, LGBT individuals, people with disabilities, and people with limited English proficiency.

Older adults are at the center of our nation's housing affordability and homelessness crisis, as our nation's population is aging and income inequality continues to grow, especially for older adults of color. Older adult renters are more likely to spend a large share of their income on rent than the population as a whole, and these rental cost burdens place them at increased risk of housing instability and homelessness. Caught in the vise between their fixed, lower incomes and steadily rising costs for rental housing, low-income seniors, disproportionately Black and Latinx renters, are facing unsustainable rent burdens, paying ever higher percentages of their meager incomes on housing. This untenable situation causes life-threatening stress and leads to people having to

*Washington, DC*

*Los Angeles, CA*

*Oakland, CA*

choose between paying rent, eating, or buying medications—while also increasing the risk they will be forced onto the streets.

Thank you for your consideration. 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, and to ensure that older adults do not experience their last days living on the streets.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patti Prunhuber". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Patti Prunhuber  
Senior Housing Attorney

Cc: