

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

May 21, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
United States Senate Committee on
Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
United States Senate Committee on
Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nina Lowey
Chairwoman
United States House Committee on
Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
United States House Committee on
Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Chairwoman Lowey, and Ranking Member Granger:

We write to you regarding the urgent need for Congress to provide additional funding to assist individuals experiencing — or at risk of experiencing — homelessness, both in New Hampshire and around the country, as the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continues.

Ensuring that individuals experiencing homelessness have the resources that they need to practice social distancing and self-quarantine if needed is critical to mitigating the spread of the virus, both now and over the coming months. New Hampshire's homelessness services have been working to provide individuals experiencing homelessness with safe places to shelter, maintain personal hygiene, and receive supportive services, but we know that there is much more to do.

Homelessness services organizations have worked with both state and local governments to implement emergency decompression shelter and isolation procedures, and New Hampshire has so far dedicated \$3 million in federal *Coronavirus Aid, Recovery, and Economic Security*

(*CARES*) Act funding to assist shelter staff, to pay for increased shelter costs, and to aid community agencies that help individuals experiencing homelessness find long-term residences. And we are glad that the *CARES Act* includes resources for veterans experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, which will provide important supportive housing, health care, decompression, and eviction prevention services to veterans in New Hampshire and across the country.

It is also important to acknowledge that shelters and service providers are going to have to continue social distancing practices for the foreseeable future, in order to safeguard the health and wellness of their residents. Maintaining these practices will involve prolonged changes to physical spaces, food preparation and distribution, and staffing, in addition to other changes that will increase ongoing expenses. Allocating additional, flexible resources to make these necessary changes will go far in ensuring that states can adapt to the shelter capacity and sanitation challenges exacerbated by COVID-19.

Additionally, it is critical that Congress also work to support renters who are at risk of experiencing homelessness due to financial strain caused by the crisis. While the federal eviction moratorium in the *CARES Act* was a necessary first step, many renters who have lost their jobs due to the pandemic will struggle to make up their rent once federal, state, and local moratoriums lift. The \$4 billion allocation for Emergency Solutions Grants in the *CARES Act* will help provide some relief, through emergency assistance and eviction prevention activities such as landlord-tenant mediation. Including the *Prevent Evictions Act*, which would provide additional grant funding to landlord-tenant mediation programs, in future stimulus legislation would also help tenants struggling to pay their rent reach fair outcomes with their landlords and remain in their homes.

It is clear that additional resources will be needed to address the scope of this crisis and keep renters stably housed. We applaud the inclusion of additional funding for Emergency Solutions Grants, \$700 million for Department of Agriculture rural rental assistance programs, and a \$100 billion rental assistance fund in the *Heroes Act* recently proposed in the House of Representatives, and we encourage you to continue to include these provisions in any compromise legislation.

We look forward to continuing to work with you on these and other important priorities.

Sincerely,



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Ann McLane Kuster



Chris Pappas

Member of Congress

Member of Congress