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## Advocates Urge No Cuts to Build Back Better

**PROVIDENCE, R.I.** – As Congressional leaders negotiate over the size and scope of the Build Back Better Act, the National Low Income Housing Coalition’s (NLIHC) HoUSed campaign and Homes RI urge Congress to ensure that any final economic recovery package prioritizes housing investments targeted to serve America’s lowest-income and most marginalized households who face the greatest, clearest needs. The Build Back Better Act must include investments in rental assistance, public housing, and the Housing Trust Fund at the historic levels approved by the House Financial Services Committee and drafted with the Senate Banking Committee.

“Rhode Island is experiencing a serious inventory issue. Even if we have the money to assist a family with rental costs, there is still no place to put them,” said Housing Network of Rhode Island Executive Director Melina Lodge. “This infrastructure bill offers an extraordinary opportunity to invest in the production of new housing units and the preservation of existing ones, invest in rental subsidy to boost housing access, and support healthy homes and infrastructure to maintain existing housing supply and ensure Rhode Islanders’ safety.”

America is in the grips of an affordable housing crisis, most severely impacting the most marginalized and lowest-income people. Nationally, there is a shortage of 7 million homes affordable and available to the lowest-income renters. There are proven solutions that can address the affordability crisis, but current funding levels from Congress leave three out of four eligible households receiving no assistance at all. This shredded social safety net is what brought us to the brink of an eviction tsunami during a global health emergency.

Despite the clear and urgent need, only one in four households who qualify for housing assistance receives it due to decades of chronic underfunding by Congress. People of color – especially women of color – and other marginalized renters are most harmed by the housing crisis. It is imperative that our leaders support investments that would ensure equitable access to housing for all Rhode Islanders, including those disproportionately impacted by the disaster of the pandemic and historic systems of discrimination.

The National Low Income Housing Coalition’s (NLIHC) HoUSed campaign and Homes RI urge Congress to enact historic investments in the country’s affordable housing infrastructure, including \$90 billion to expand rental assistance to 1 million more households, \$80 billion to preserve public housing for more than 2.5 million residents, and \$37 billion for the national Housing Trust Fund to build, preserve and rehabilitate 330,000 apartments affordable to the lowest-income people. Any spending cuts to the Build Back Better Act must not come at the expense of these proven solutions to America’s housing crisis.

"Every week the statewide Coordinated Entry System receives over a thousand calls from Rhode Islanders in desperate need of shelter. We try to help them as best we can, but there is virtually nowhere for our neighbors and their families to go," said Kristina Contreras Fox, Senior Policy Analyst at RI Coalition to End Homelessness. "There are nearly 500 people living on the streets of our state, a number five times higher than our count pre-COVID, with winter on the way. Access to safe, secure, affordable housing is the only solution, and that's what we need right now from Congress. Housing ends homelessness."

An underlying cause of America's housing crisis is a market failure that results in a severe shortage of rental homes affordable to people with the lowest incomes. In Rhode Island there are 45,103 extremely low-income households which makes up 29% of renter households. Unfortunately, for every 100 extremely low-income households in our state, only 52 units are affordable and available to them. Given that Rhode Island approved the least amount of construction for new units than any other state last year, it is crucial to begin development to meet the needs of our most vulnerable community.

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Homes RI is a statewide coalition of organizations working together to increase the supply of safe, healthy and affordable homes throughout Rhode Island. Our coalition includes healthcare providers, homeless service agencies, affordable housing developers, child and family advocates, resident membership organizations, trade associations and other cross-sector partners.

For more information about Homes RI, please visit [www.homesri.org](http://www.homesri.org)

For more information about the HoUSed campaign, please visit [www.nlihc.org/housed](http://www.nlihc.org/housed).