

# **ACTION ALERT**

June 16, 2008

## **Calls Needed To Support Housing Trust Fund** Please Contact Your Senators Today

### **ACTION NEEDED**

Please call your senators today, urging them to support the Housing Trust Fund championed by Senators Christopher Dodd and Jack Reed in the Senate Banking Committee. Please use this toll free number, 1-877-210-5351, to reach the Congressional switchboard and ask to be connected to your senators' offices. Ask to speak to the legislative assistant who handles housing issues for your senators. You may locate your Senators at [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov).

### **BACKGROUND**

*The Federal Housing Finance Regulatory Reform Act of 2008* (no bill number has been assigned yet), a broad government sponsored enterprises/foreclosure prevention bill, which passed the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee with strong bipartisan support on May 20, could come to **the Senate floor as early as Tuesday, June 17**. This bill includes a National Housing Trust Fund that would produce and preserve housing for extremely low and very low income households.

### **USCCB POSITION**

Catholic Social Teaching has long recognized housing as a basic human right. The Catholic community—through its parishes, diocesan structures, and Catholic Charities agencies—is one of the largest providers of shelter in the nation. Since the late 1960's, the federal government through the Department of Housing and Urban Development has solicited, encouraged, and funded a variety of Church sponsored housing--particularly senior housing, transitional housing, homeless shelters, and some family units.

Bishop William Murphy, on behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has written to the Senate urging support of a National Housing Trust Fund as “a genuine opportunity to let the American people know that the housing needs of low-income families are a national priority...” and to “demonstrate how vitally important housing is to the well-being of families and our communities.” See attached letter.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Thom Shellabarger at the USCCB, 202 541 3189 or [tshellabarger@usccb.org](mailto:tshellabarger@usccb.org)



## Department of Justice, Peace, and Human Development

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June 16, 2008

United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

As Chairman of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, I am writing in strong support of specific provisions in "*The Federal Housing Finance Regulatory Reform Act of 2008*" that will come before the Senate for its approval. This bill contains the basic requirements of the Senate's National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act (S. 2523), by identifying dedicated funding sources to produce and preserve housing for the nation's lowest income households.

We are pleased that the Senate bill would benefit extremely low income families by requiring that at least 75 percent of the housing trust fund's resources serve people with income below 30 percent of the area median income. All of the funds would have to benefit people with incomes below 50 percent of the area median income.

Likewise, the bill's provisions will further ensure that the housing trust fund focuses on the very lowest income households by requiring no more than 10 percent be used for homeownership. By every measure, these families have the nation's greatest housing affordability problems.

The Catholic Bishops of the United States noted in their statement, *Putting Children and Families First*: "Many families cannot find or afford decent housing, or must spend so much of their income for shelter that they forego other necessities, such as food and medicine.... [The Catholic bishops] support housing policies which seek to preserve and increase the supply of affordable housing and help families pay for it." We must put in place a sustainable source of funds to build affordable housing. We urged that all of these dedicated revenues be used on housing benefiting the lowest income people as the bill moves forward.

In our considered judgment, the establishment of a National Affordable Housing Trust Fund presents Congress with a genuine opportunity to let the American people know that the housing needs of low-income families are a national priority. I urge you to support these provisions in "*The Federal Housing Finance Regulatory Reform Act of 2008*" as one way to demonstrate how vitally important housing is to the well-being of families and our communities.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend William F. Murphy  
Bishop of Rockville Centre  
Chairman  
Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development