

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 29, 2008

The Honorable Kent Conrad  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on the Budget  
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Judd Gregg  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on the Budget  
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Conrad and Ranking Member Gregg:

As the Senate Budget Committee begins consideration of the Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Resolution, we ask that you provide the highest possible, fiscally responsible increase for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program in your budget assumptions. Increasing numbers of Americans are facing housing affordability challenges, whether they are renters or homeowners. The housing affordability burden continues to fall most heavily on low-income renters throughout our country and current federal programs, including tenant-based Section 8, are not keeping pace when it comes to addressing this affordability burden.

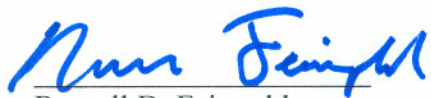
The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, originally created in 1974, is the largest Federal housing program in terms of HUD's budget with approximately two million vouchers currently authorized. Yet the current number of vouchers does not come close to meeting the demand that exists in communities around our country. We have all heard from advocates in our states about the increased need for additional funding for the tenant-based program – not only to fund existing vouchers in use, but to also fund new, incremental tenant-based vouchers for low-income families currently not served by the program.

A number of different government agencies and advocacy organizations all cite the effectiveness of Section 8 in assisting low-income families in meeting some of their housing needs. In 2002, the Government Accountability Office determined that the total cost of a one-bedroom housing unit through the Section 8 program costs less than it would through other federal housing programs. The same year, the Bipartisan Millennial Housing Commission reported to Congress that the Section 8 program is “flexible, cost-effective, and successful in its mission,” and called for a substantial investment in the tenant-based Section 8 program.

We urge you to include a sizable and fiscally responsible increase for the tenant-based Section 8 program in your budget assumptions for fiscal year 2009 that will not only fully fund existing vouchers, but also provide funding for new Section 8 vouchers in FY09. We also look forward to working with you to not only boost funding for this

valuable federal program that helps millions of American families secure affordable housing, but to also promote responsible reforms to the Section 8 program that will allow the program to better serve the needs of American for years to come.

Sincerely,



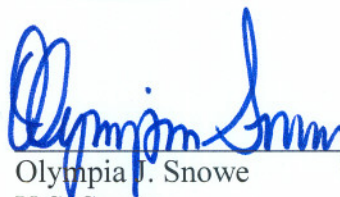
Russell D. Feingold  
U.S. Senator



Susan M. Collins  
U.S. Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
U.S. Senator



Olympia J. Snowe  
U.S. Senator



Hillary Rodham Clinton  
U.S. Senator



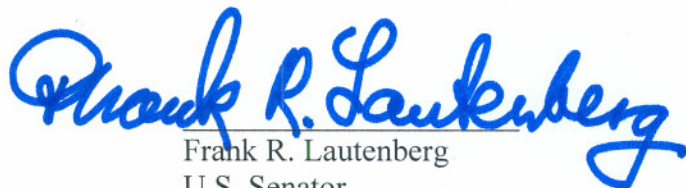
Norm Coleman  
U.S. Senator



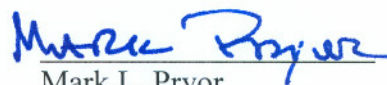
Herb Kohl  
U.S. Senator



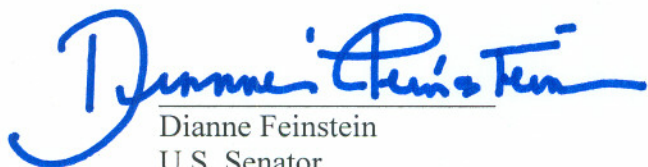
Charles E. Schumer  
U.S. Senator



Frank R. Lautenberg  
U.S. Senator



Mark L. Pryor  
U.S. Senator



Dianne Feinstein  
U.S. Senator