

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 6, 2017

The Honorable Susan Collins, Chairman
The Honorable Jack Reed, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and
Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Collins and Ranking Member Reed,

Housing discrimination has a tremendous toll on American families, threatening their chance to live in a neighborhood where their children can achieve in school, have greater access to public services and transportation, and utilize the public investments our nation has made in our communities that help Americans succeed. As the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee works toward appropriating funds for Fiscal Year 2018, we urge your support for level funding of \$39.2 million for the Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP).

FHIP is the federal program that supports the work of qualified nonprofit fair housing organizations' throughout the nation to educate the public and housing industry professionals, and address housing discrimination. Using FHIP's Education and Outreach Initiatives (EOI) grant, FHIP grantees empower their communities to recognize discrimination by educating the public about their rights to housing choice free from discrimination. FHIP grantees also provide critical and relied-upon training to local housing providers, including real estate professionals, rental and leasing companies, and lenders about how to comply with the Fair Housing Act. Nonprofit organizations funded by Private Enforcement Initiative (PEI) grants are also the first line of contact for Americans who believe they have experienced housing discrimination. These groups investigate initial complaints of housing discrimination and investigate housing sites to determine the extent of any discrimination that may be occurring and assist individuals through the complaint process when there is evidence of discrimination.

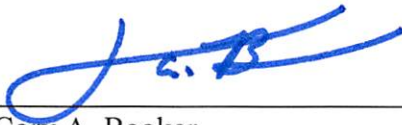
FHIP is a small but highly effective program. HUD has recognized that cases referred by FHIP agencies are twice as likely to result in a settlement or charges of a violation, resulting in the opening of countless units of housing for every complaint of discrimination they receive from FHIP groups. Through early research and testing, FHIP enforcement grant recipients ensure that only instances of real housing discrimination are brought to HUD, local or state civil rights agencies that assist HUD, and the various court systems.

In FY 2015, HUD awarded FHIP grants to 115 nonprofit fair housing organizations and projects that competed for the funds, supporting fair housing education and enforcement in 44 states and the District of Columbia. Unfortunately, existing resources do not come close to addressing the

4 million estimated annual incidents of housing discrimination that occur in our nation, especially in states that do not have a full-service nonprofit fair housing organization for the public to go to. Given the demonstrated need to address housing discrimination and the value that the FHIP program provides, we urge the Subcommittee to provide \$39.2 million in funding for FHIP in FY 2018.

We must do all we can to maintain support for FHIP and continue to take on the important work of eliminating housing discrimination and maintaining housing opportunities available to every American. Thank you for your consideration of this request and your support of efforts to end housing discrimination.

Sincerely,



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



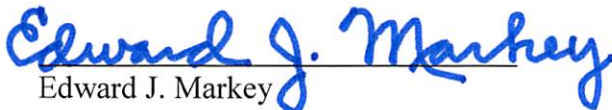
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United States Senator



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Tammy Duckworth
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Sherrod Brown
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Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

Dick Durbin

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Heidi Heitkamp

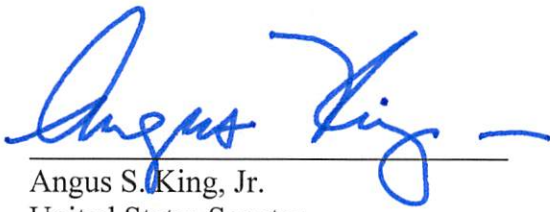
Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell

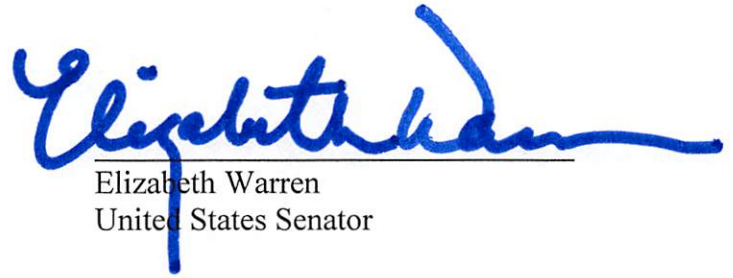
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Al Franken

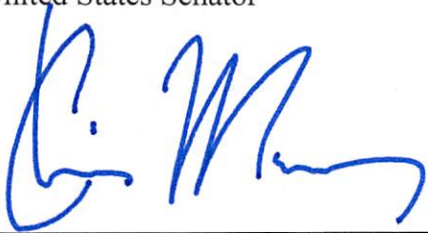
Al Franken
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator