Closing the Housing Opportunity Gap

Investing in vouchers improves neighborhoods and health

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Given robust evidence on the effectiveness of rental assistance in reducing housing instability and promoting health, deep investments in housing subsidies are urgently needed to ensure families can afford rent in the neighborhood of their choice. Passage of the following key pieces of legislation will promote economic mobility, and health and educational outcomes for children and families.

The Family Stability and Opportunity Act

The bipartisan Family Stability and Opportunity Act filed by Senators Van Hollen (D-MD) and Young (R-IN) makes critical investments in families with young children by creating 500,000 Opportunity Vouchers – also known as "mobility vouchers". The bill will:

- Provide rental subsidies to pregnant people and families with young children under age 6 who have a recent history of homelessness or housing instability, live in an area of concentrated poverty, or are at risk of displacement from a well-resourced neighborhood.
- Pair subsidies with mobility counseling and services that support those interested in moving to more well-resourced neighborhoods.

This evidence-based program will set children on a trajectory for healthy growth and development, educational success, and future economic mobility while also reducing avoidable health and educational costs. Importantly, this policy – among others that intentionally seek to reverse the effects of systemic racism and discrimination – will advance efforts to desegregate neighborhoods, promote racial health equity, and ensure all children have a healthy start in life.

The Ending Homelessness Act

The Ending Homelessness Act filed by Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-CA) provides a robust, multipronged strategy for ending housing instability and homelessness in the United States. This bill will:

- Establish a universal voucher program for all eligible households.
- Make needed investments to build homes for people with the greatest housing needs.
- Ban source-of-income discrimination (when a tenant is refused a lease as a voucher holder) and fund fair housing enforcement.
- Reduce segregation and expand opportunity by increasing housing choice.
- Permanently authorizes the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness and the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act which coordinate the national response to homelessness.

This policy solution is in response to overwhelming evidence of the negative impact housing instability and homelessness have on health, educational, and economic mobility outcomes. This bill will not only improve housing affordability for millions of eligible renters currently unserved by federal housing programs, but also reduce racial/ethnic health inequities by intentionally seeking to advance antiracist policies that undo the harmful impact of residential housing segregation, root out housing discrimination, and ensure rental assistance is available to all eligible households – particularly those most harmed by structural racism, poverty, and homelessness.

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