

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2020

The Honorable David Price
Chairman

Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Ranking Member

Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Price and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart:

We write to you today to urge that you continue to fund the \$50 million Domestic Violence Bonus (DV Bonus) funds set aside from the Continuum of Care (CoC) homelessness program at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the FY2021 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill.

The \$50 million DV Bonus Funds provide dedicated funding for rapid re-housing and supportive service projects via HUD's CoC grant program that assist survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking in accessing lifesaving housing resources after abuse.

Funds from the DV Bonus project significantly improve a survivor's access to safe housing and builds the capacity of the victim services field to provide survivor-centered housing. According to HUD data, through the Fiscal Year 2018 CoC Competition, communities served nearly 5,000 more survivors of domestic violence in residential projects. Between the Fiscal Year 2017 and Fiscal Year 2018 CoC Competition, HUD has funded an increase of 6,000 beds dedicated to survivor of domestic and sexual violence. Of those beds, 4,700 of them were funded by DV Bonus projects.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), and found that domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking are widespread. Domestic violence affects more than 7.9 million Americans every year and more than one in three women and one in four men have experienced rape, physical, violence, or stalking in his or her lifetime. Survivors have experienced severe impacts of domestic violence such as fear, concern for their safety, need for medical care, injury, need for housing services, and missing work or school.

Domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness for women and their children. Nearly 40% of all victims of domestic violence become homeless when they escape abuse. Abusers

commonly sabotage a victim's economic stability, making them more vulnerable to homelessness. Many victims and survivors of domestic violence struggle to find rental properties due to damaged credit, rental, and employment histories as a result of their abuse. Victims of domestic violence and sexual assault often flee life-threatening circumstances and seek refuge through emergency shelter, transitional housing and rapid rehousing programs in order to avoid homelessness. The stakes are incredibly high when survivors leave their abusers. Three women are killed, on average, each day in this country at the hands of a current or former abuser. However, despite the critical need, many survivors are unable to find housing. In a nationwide study, more than half (51.5%) of the victims who identified a need for housing services did not receive them.

For those individuals who are not able to find safety, the consequences can be extremely dire, including continued exposure to life-threatening violence or homelessness. It is absolutely unconscionable that victims cannot find safety for themselves and their children due to a lack of adequate investment in these services.

Dedicated funds for survivor-specific housing, including rapid-rehousing, offers stable resources for victim service providers to address the housing, safety, and confidentiality needs of survivors with a trauma-informed approach.

In order to meet the immediate needs of victims for safe housing, we urge a funding level of \$50 million for survivor-centered housing and other support service programs to ensure we are continuing to invest in the safety and economic wellbeing of domestic violence survivors.

Sincerely,



Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



John Katko
Member of Congress

**Domestic Violence Bonus Funds Set Aside
FY2021 Letter
Cosigners**

Member of Congress

Brian Fitzpatrick

Danny K. Davis

Debbie Dingell

Eddie Bernice Johnson

Gwen Moore

Jackie Speier

Jahana Hayes

Joe Neguse

Josh Gottheimer

Julia Brownley

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