



Department of Social Development and World Peace
Office of Domestic Social Development

Background on the National Housing Trust Fund
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The lack of affordable housing in our nation threatens the well-being of families and the economic life of our communities. On average, families across the country must earn \$16.31 an hour—more than twice the minimum wage—to afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent. A full-time minimum wage worker cannot afford the fair market rent anywhere in the country. The lack of housing in our communities affects economic development—businesses simply will not locate in communities where their workers cannot live.

Housing is a proven economic stimulus. A \$5 billion investment in housing production would initially create hundreds of thousands of new jobs. The initial goal of the National Housing Trust Fund is to build and preserve 1.5 million units of rental housing for the lowest income families over the next 10 years.

A National Housing Trust Fund bill was first introduced in 2003 and had well over 200 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives by 2004. That bill would have established a trust fund that would serve as a source of revenue for the production of new housing, and the preservation or rehabilitation of existing housing that is affordable for low income people. A similar bill will soon be introduced in the 110th Congress.

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.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has written to Congress to support the creation of a National Housing Trust Fund as “a genuine opportunity to let the American people know that the shelter 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.”

ACTION

Contact your Representative and Senators and urge them to co-sponsor The National Housing Trust Fund. Members of Congress need to hear from people in local communities about the need to provide every family with access to affordable housing.

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