



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

Majority Leader Chuck Schumer
U.S. Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Minority Leader Mitch McConnell
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Speaker Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

To Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Leader McCarthy:

CCD is the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for Federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration, and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society, free from racism, ableism, sexism, and xenophobia, as well as LGBTQ+ based discrimination and religious intolerance. The Housing Task-Force of CCD focuses on ensuring accessible, affordable, equitable housing is available for all people with disabilities in communities of their own choosing. We write to you today to urge you to ensure that any forthcoming budget reconciliation package includes urgently-needed housing investments that will enable our communities to live safely and securely in housing and communities that are accessible to us.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, America was in the midst of a housing crisis that has severely impacted people with disabilities. Disabled Americans are often among the lowest-income earners in the country, experiencing poverty at twice the rate of nondisabled Americans, and many people with disabilities rely on SSI as their sole source of income. This has meant that American disabilities have been particularly hard hit by this affordability crisis. Prior to the pandemic there was already no place in the United States where the income provided from SSI is enough to afford a single-bedroom apartment at market rates. In fact, even a full-time worker at minimum wage -at substantially more income than an SSI recipient can earn- can only afford a market-rate single-bedroom apartment in 5% of all counties in America.

In addition, people with disabilities have faced numerous additional barriers to accessible housing. Studies have consistently found that the exceedingly few housing units meet basic standards for accessibility. More than 6 percent of U.S. households, representing 6.9 million households, reported having a physical accessibility need, yet less than 2% of homes meet



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conventional standards for physical accessibility, with few existing homes planning to make necessary accessibility modifications in the near future. Limited accessibility severely restricts the ability of disabled people to make effective housing choices and to participate fully in our communities. Single family homes, which predominate rental markets, are particularly unlikely to have even minimal accessibility features, often excluding people with disabilities from entire neighborhoods and communities. Addressing the accessibility needs of disabled people requires both new construction that puts priority on the creation of accessible units, and investment in rehabilitation and preservation that includes accessibility retrofits.

As a result of these crises, people with disabilities remain at outsized risk of homelessness and housing insecurity. Seven million renters with disabilities are moderately or severely cost-burdened, meaning they pay at more than 30% of their income on housing. For many disabled renters, these burdens can be particularly costly, due to additional medical and services expenses, and limited ability to earn or save without threatening essential supports and benefits. These cost burdens, in addition to widespread housing discrimination and lack of accessible units, leaves renters with disabilities at much greater risk of facing eviction and homelessness. These burdens fall especially hard on women with disabilities and people of color with disabilities, with disabled women of color facing by far the greatest risk of homelessness.

The affordable housing investments already passed by the House are a critical first step to addressing the long-neglected housing needs of our communities. As you consider steps forward for an economic recovery package, we encourage you to ensure that any forthcoming bill includes the priorities that were included in that package, including:

- Lowering the private activity bond cap from 50% to 25% for the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (Housing Credit).
- Increase Housing Credit allocations by 50 percent over current levels to help meet the vast and growing need for affordable housing.
- Enable the Housing Credit to better serve hard-to-reach communities including rural, Native American, high-poverty, and high-cost communities, as well as extremely low-income and formerly homeless tenants.
- \$25 billion to expand Housing Choice Rental Assistance vouchers to an additional 300,000 households.
- \$65 billion to preserve the nation's deteriorating public housing infrastructure.
- \$15 billion for the national Housing Trust Fund to build and preserve over 150,000



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- accessible, affordable homes for households with the lowest incomes.
- \$1.45 billion for the preservation and improvement of HUD multifamily housing, including Section 8, Section 202, and Section 811 project-based housing.

These investments are an essential and deeply overdue step towards addressing America's increasingly urgent housing needs, and addressing the severe shortage of accessible and affordable rental units experienced by the disabled community. We strongly urge you to ensure that we continue to prioritize these housing investments in any forthcoming reconciliation package. Please contact Allie Cannington (Allie@thekelsey.org), Greg Robinson (grobenson@autisticadvocacy.org) or Carlean Ponder (Ponder@thearc.org), with any questions or to arrange a meeting.

Sincerely,

American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR)
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Caring Across Generations
Justice in Aging
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Council on Independent Living
National Down Syndrome Congress
The Arc of the U.S.
The Kelsey