

November 12, 2004

**THE
CATHOLIC HEALTH
ASSOCIATION**
OF THE UNITED STATES

Senator Christopher Bond
274 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-2503
(Via email kit_bond@senate.gov)
Re: Veterans Affairs, HUD and Independent Agencies 2005 Appropriations

Dear Senator Bond:

The Catholic Health Association (CHA) and Mercy Housing request your continued support for the Senate's 2005 HUD appropriations bill. We strongly endorse the Senate's proposed increases for public housing, homeless assistance, fair housing, CDBG, HOME, Section 202 and Section 811 housing. We also strongly support adequate funding to renew all project and tenant based vouchers, with oversight by Congress, as provided in the Senate bill.



Headquartered in St. Louis, CHA is the national leadership organization of more than 2,000 Catholic healthcare sponsors, systems, facilities and related organizations. Mercy Housing is a national non-profit organization sponsored by communities of Catholic Sisters that finances, develops and manages affordable housing serving 45,000 households. Mercy Housing has developed housing in Kansas City and Lee's Summit, Missouri and has an additional 66 units under construction in Joplin.

CHA and its members partner with Mercy Housing to assess and address housing needs across the country. We work to bring together creative resources to fund affordable housing but we cannot be successful without help from HUD. We strongly support increased HUD funding that provides resources for new housing, preserving existing housing and continuing the Section 8 program. While we otherwise endorse the Senate's HUD appropriations bill, we urge you to consider the removal of Section 224, which would prohibit the use of federal funds by public housing authorities to do a range of voter registration and get out the vote activities. We support the ability of housing authorities to utilize appropriate funds for activities that encourage civic engagement and believe that these experiences are essential for building empowered communities.

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As chair of the VA/HUD Subcommittee we strongly urge you to support the Senate's HUD bill, and recognize the benefits of maintaining and increasing the ability of families, senior citizens and people with special needs to access safe and quality housing. We appreciate your attention and your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Michael A. Place".

Father Michael Place, Catholic Health Association
Sister Lillian Murphy, Mercy Housing