

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2016

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation-HUD
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Price
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation-HUD
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Price:

We write to express our strong support for level funding in Fiscal Year 2017 for two small HUD programs that support affordable housing in rural communities—the Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program (SHOP) and the Rural Capacity Building (RCB) program.

SHOP has been a uniquely effective tool for creating successful low-income homeownership nationwide, especially in rural America where affordable housing support is very limited. The RCB program builds the capacity of local entities taking on affordable housing and community development activities that benefit low and moderate income families in rural areas. In light of limited federal funding available to support low-income homeownership, especially in rural areas, preserving funding for these successful and efficient programs has never been more important.

Since 1996, SHOP funding has supported the work of nonprofit organizations that employ the self-help homeownership model, a method that has assisted tens of thousands of low-income families, and fostered them to be committed, successful homeowners. Through this sweat equity approach, low-income families must put in at least 100 hours of “sweat equity” in their homes, and most families average more than 350 hours. SHOP funds are used to defray land acquisition, property and infrastructure costs, some of the most difficult activities for local nonprofits to finance.

SHOP is one of HUD’s most successful programs, and has made a huge impact in rural America. This small, effective program has enabled local nonprofit organizations since 1996 to build more than 30,000 homes and house more than 75,000 adults and children. Of these homes, 50% are in rural areas. SHOP grantees have raised a significant amount of private leverage and brought in more than \$2 billion of investment into communities. SHOP is also one of only four federal housing programs out of 40 studies that received a top rating in OMB’s PART evaluation system.

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National nonprofits compete for SHOP allocations annually through HUD and then grant funding to hundreds of local nonprofits in every state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Current grantees include Habitat for Humanity International, Community Frameworks, the Housing Assistance Council, and Tierra del Sol Housing Corporation.

HUD's RCB program brings resources to local housing nonprofits and others working to develop or preserve affordable homes and build stronger communities. This program works nationwide—providing training, technical assistance, information, and financing—to serve the neediest rural communities across the country.

Providing sufficient appropriations for these capacity building and financial assistance programs will leverage millions of additional dollars and improve the quality of life in rural America.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you to ensure that our nation's rural housing needs are met.

Sincerely,



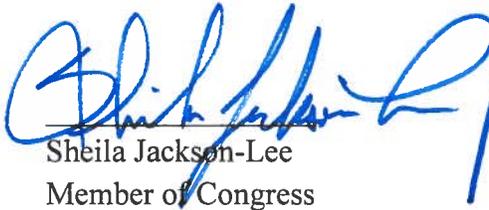
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Member of Congress



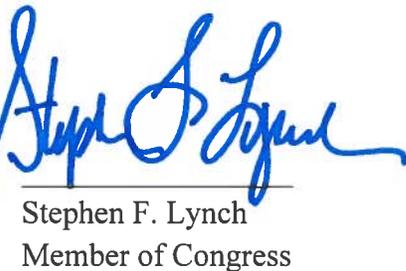
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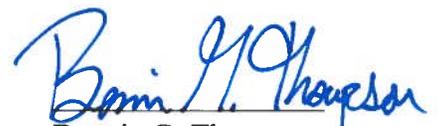
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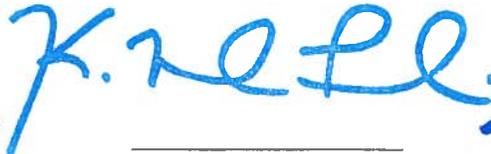
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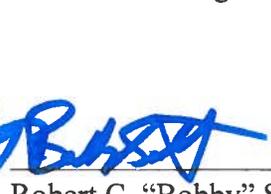

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