



May 14, 2020

Honorable U.S. Representative Scott Peters
U.S. House of Representatives
2338 Rayburn Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Peters,

As the U.S. House of Representatives prepares to consider H.R. 6800, the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act, the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) urges you to support the provisions that would provide emergency rental assistance and additional funds to address homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

By creating a \$100 billion emergency rental assistance program through the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program to disburse assistance to families struggling due to the financial impact of COVID-19, this legislation will help families continue to pay their rent and utilities amid the economic uncertainty COVID-19 has caused. The HEROES Act also would provide \$1 billion for emergency Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers to assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness, at risk of homelessness or fleeing domestic violence.

SDHC administers federal funds to provide rental assistance to families in the City of San Diego, the eighth-largest city in the nation and second-largest in California. SDHC provides federal Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance to more than 15,000 households with low-income.

SDHC has estimated that approximately 35 percent of our rental assistance households that are identified as able to work will experience significant wage reductions due to COVID-19. To further help these households, SDHC is utilizing revised criteria for families currently in the federal rental assistance program to report decreases in income due to COVID-19, which may enable SDHC to temporarily provide a higher amount of rental assistance to these households.

In addition, the HEROES Act would provide a yearlong moratorium on evictions due to nonpayment of rent, as well as temporary relief from foreclosures on property owners. This will provide protections nationally that are similar to those in place in the City of San Diego. On March 18, 2020, SDHC implemented a policy to not evict any residents at the affordable rental housing properties it owns or manages due to nonpayment of rent because of financial effects of COVID-19. SDHC also supported a citywide temporary ban on evictions because of the financial effects of COVID-19, which the San Diego City Council adopted on March 25, 2020.

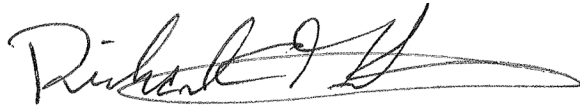
SDHC also works closely with the City of San Diego, County of San Diego, Regional Task Force on the Homeless and many partner service providers on a system-wide, coordinated plan to further help sheltered and unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness remain healthy during the global COVID-19 pandemic. The \$11.5 billion in ESG funds designated in the HEROES Act to address homelessness would support efforts like San Diego's regional efforts to assist vulnerable populations during this health crisis.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, signed into law on March 27, 2020, provides financial relief to millions of households, but this assistance is insufficient to protect against a housing crisis.

The HEROES Act is a needed next step to address the unexpected and unprecedented economic effects of COVID-19.

If you have any questions, please contact me directly at 619-578-7531 or rickg@sdhc.org

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard C. Gentry", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Richard C. Gentry
President & Chief Executive Officer
San Diego Housing Commission