



UP FOR GROWTH

- action -

March 24, 2020

The Honorable Denny Heck
2452 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
2264 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Derek Kilmer
1410 Longworth House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Suzan DelBene
2330 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Heck, Smith, Kilmer and DelBene:

We write today in support of H.R. 6314, the *Emergency Rental Assistance Act of 2020*. This is the type of innovative thinking and efficient approach needed to help the Americans who are, and will continue to be, most affected by the fallout from COVID-19. Thank you for your continued leadership on housing during the ongoing national housing shortage and affordability crisis and the current one resulting from COVID-19.

The *Emergency Rental Assistance Act of 2020* would fund the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program for short-term rental assistance to the Americans losing their jobs through no fault of their own but who must still pay rent every month. Providing \$100 billion in funding directly to states and through an existing program with well-established infrastructure already in place means people struggling to make ends meet will quickly get the help they need. Up for Growth Action also appreciates that the legislation expands eligible assistance to those earning up to 80% of area median income; a tacit acknowledgment that housing is already a significant expense even for families not considered to be extremely low-income.

H.R. 6314 fits within Up for Growth Action's legislative priorities for responding to COVID-19. In a letter sent in coordination with other housing organizations on March 19, we advocated for using the ESG program as a means of immediate response, and direct assistance for low-income renters who will suffer the most in the immediate economic downturn resulting from COVID-19. Using existing programs is an efficient way to prevent a public health crisis from becoming an economic nightmare for millions of families.

Again, thank you for your leadership on housing and keen understanding that COVID-19 is a threat to our already vulnerable housing ecosystem. We look forward to working with you to solve immediate housing challenges, as well as the long-term effects of a severe shortage of homes.

Sincerely,

Mike Kingsella
Executive Director
Up for Growth Action