March 23, 2020

The Honorable Bernard Sanders, U. S. Senator
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.  20510

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren, U. S. Senator
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.  20510

The Honorable Jeffrey Merkley, U. S. Senator
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.  20510

The Honorable Katie Porter, U. S. Congresswoman
1117 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D. C.  20515

The Honorable Ayanna Pressley, U. S. Congresswoman
1108 Longworth Housing Office Building
Washington, D. C.  20515

Dear Senators Merkley, Sanders and Warren; Congresswomen Porter and Pressley;

Thank you for your advocacy on behalf of low- and moderate-income renters and public housing authorities across the country. We appreciate your efforts and your continued support is needed now more than ever.

We do want to note that in your March 16 letter to Secretary of HUD Ben Carson, you call on HUD to issue a moratorium on evictions for individuals living in HUD assisted housing, including public housing and the housing choice voucher program. PHADA supports suspending eviction actions for non-payment at this time, and most members are individually taking that action. In addition, many localities, states, and court systems are also putting moratoriums on processing of non-payment eviction cases.
We must point out, however, that HUD and Secretary Carson do not have the authority to put a moratorium on evictions for public housing or the housing choice voucher program. These landlord-tenant relationships are between the tenant and the landlord (the public housing authority in the case of public housing, the private landlord in the case of the Housing Choice Voucher Program) and are governed by state and local landlord/tenant laws.

What public housing authorities need is substantial regulatory and statutory relief from certain requirements that will enable housing authorities to better meet the needs of their residents and staff in this time of crisis. Please see the attached request we sent to Secretary Carson on March 13.

In addition, PHADA and other industry groups are requesting inclusion of significant supplemental appropriations for the public housing and housing choice voucher programs, and thank you in advance for your efforts to ensure such funding is included in future emergency appropriations so our members can continue to operate and provide essential housing services to their communities.

Please contact us for more information and to discuss additional strategies and steps we may be able to take to address this crisis. We look forward to working with you to support our members and the low-income households they serve every day.

Sincerely,

Timothy G. Kaiser
Executive Director

PHADA (The Public Housing Authorities Directors Association) is a membership organization representing approximately 1900 public housing authority executives from across the nation. Our membership includes public housing agencies of all types, from the largest in the country to some of the smallest. We work with members and on their behalf with staff at HUD and members of Congress and their staff to develop and implement good policy and effective operation of existing housing, supportive service, and community development programs and to develop new and effective policies and programs serving the low- and moderate-income households in our member’s communities. Our members are on the ground across the country serving low- and moderate-income households and communities, often providing housing and other services in LMI neighborhoods.