



The Honorable Mitch McConnell
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer,

The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) writes to urge you to address the urgent housing needs of America's lowest-income renter households, which includes individuals with disabilities, in the next coronavirus relief package.

NDRN is the non-profit membership association of the nationwide network of Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agencies in every state and territory. The P&A Network comprises the nation's largest provider of legally-based advocacy services for individuals with disabilities. NDRN, like most of the nation, is gravely concerned about the outbreak of COVID-19 across the United States, and we are particularly concerned about the growing needs of people with disabilities. We strongly believe more needs to be done in order to protect people with disabilities who are facing an unstable housing situation as a result of the pandemic.

To avoid widespread evictions and homelessness, we support and urge you to include in any coronavirus relief package the Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stabilization Act ([S. 3685/H.R. 6820](#)) as included in the [HEROES Act](#) (H.R. 6800) recently passed by the House of Representatives. These important provisions would provide \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance to help keep America's low-income people with disabilities and their families housed during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, low income people with disabilities and their families faced a national shortage of accessible and affordable housing. Low income people with disabilities often have few financial resources and thus are at a disadvantage when it comes to affording an apartment or other housing, increasing the likelihood of institutionalization or homelessness.¹ Additionally, people with disabilities far too often encounter discrimination when seeking housing. The lack of accessible and affordable housing makes moving from segregated facilities into the community extremely challenging for people with disabilities. It is becoming increasingly clear that the current federal and state interventions to prevent a surge in evictions are not

¹ Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities and National Low Income Housing Coalition. (2020, May 19). Frequently Asked Questions: housing needs of people with disabilities during the COVID-19 crisis. Retrieved from http://www.c-c-d.org/fichiers/FAQs_Disabilities.pdf

adequate in the long-term. The rental market is quickly approaching a severe crisis which will inevitably threaten millions of Americans, including those with disabilities, to remain in their homes as the economy continues to slow due to widespread loss of employment.² This will be compounded for people with disabilities who already faced a serious gap in the Labor Force Participation Rate going into the pandemic when compared to people without disabilities.³ As the labor market continues to shrink because of the pandemic, people with disabilities will face an even greater threat of housing instability and homelessness without additional federal relief.

If enacted as part of a fourth COVID-19 relief bill, the Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stabilization Act would provide states, localities, territories, and tribes with flexible resources to provide direct support to households in need with short- and medium-term rental assistance or to cover up to 6 months of back rent and late fees. The funds may also be used to stabilize households by helping to address the cost of security deposits and utility deposits and payments, among other expenses. These funds are designed to reach people in need quickly and directly; half of the funds must be allocated to states and local governments within 7 days.

Again, we urge you to include the Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stabilization Act in the next coronavirus relief package to prevent evictions and homelessness and promote housing stability among people with disabilities with the greatest needs during and after this crisis. Please contact Cyrus Huncharek, Public Policy Analyst, at cyrus.huncharek@ndrn.org to answer any questions or provide further input as needed.

Sincerely,



Curtis L. Decker
Executive Director

CC: Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, Senator Sherrod Brown, Representative Denny Heck, and Representative Maxine Waters

2 Merle, R. (2020, May 3). The housing market faces its next crisis as May rent and mortgages come due. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/05/03/may-rent-mortgages-coronavirus/>

3 Pauli, P. (2020, February 25). Ten-Fold Decrease in Job Gains for People with Disabilities. Retrieved from <https://www.respectability.org/2020/02/best-states-2020/>