



# THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

1620 EYE STREET NORTHWEST  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006  
TELEPHONE (202) 293-7330  
FAX (202) 293-2352  
URL: [www.usmayors.org](http://www.usmayors.org)

President:  
STEPHEN K. BENJAMIN  
Mayor of Columbia, SC

Vice President:  
BRYAN K. BARNETT  
Mayor of Rochester Hills

Second Vice President:  
GREG FISCHER  
Mayor of Louisville

Past President:  
ELIZABETH B. KAUTZ  
Mayor of Burnsville

Trustees:  
STEVE ADLER  
Mayor of Austin  
SHANÉ T. BEMIS  
Mayor of Gresham  
J. CHRISTIAN BOLLWAGE  
Mayor of Elizabeth  
JAMES BRAINARD  
Mayor of Carmel  
FRANK COWNIE  
Mayor of Des Moines  
BILL de BLASIO  
Mayor of New York  
JORGE O. ELORZA  
Mayor of Providence  
JOHN GILES  
Mayor of Mesa  
MIKE RAWLINGS  
Mayor of Dallas  
JAMES J. SCHMITT  
Mayor of Green Bay  
MARTIN J. WALSH  
Mayor of Boston  
NAN WHALEY  
Mayor of Dayton

Advisory Board:  
JUAN CARLOS BERMUDEZ  
Mayor of Doral  
MURIEL BOWSER  
Mayor of the District of Columbia  
SHARON WESTON BROOME  
Mayor of Baton Rouge  
ROY BUOL  
Mayor of Dubuque  
PETE BUTTIGIEG  
Mayor of South Bend  
CHRISTOPHER L. CABALDON  
Mayor of West Sacramento  
PAULINE RUSSO CUTTER  
Mayor of San Leandro  
HARDIE DAVIS, JR.  
Mayor of Augusta  
BUDDY DYER  
Mayor of Orlando  
KAREN FREEMAN-WILSON  
Mayor of Gary  
JOSEPH P. GANIM  
Mayor of Bridgeport  
OLIVER G. GILBERT, III  
Mayor of Miami Gardens  
CAROLYN G. GOODMAN  
Mayor of Las Vegas  
SYLVESTER "SLY" JAMES, JR.  
Mayor of Kansas City, MO  
HARRY LaROSILLIERE  
Mayor of Plano  
JOSEPH T. McELVEEN, JR.  
Mayor of Sumter  
JON MITCHELL  
Mayor of New Bedford  
MARK W. MITCHELL  
Mayor of Tempe  
KENNETH D. MIYAGISHIMA  
Mayor of Las Cruces  
FRANK C. ORTIS  
Mayor of Pembroke Pines  
MIGUEL A. PULIDO  
Mayor of Santa Ana  
MADÉLINE ROGGERO  
Mayor of Knoxville  
HILLARY SCHIEVE  
Mayor of Reno  
PAUL SOGLIN  
Mayor of Madison, WI  
FRANCIS X. SUAREZ  
Mayor of Miami  
SYLVESTER TURNER  
Mayor of Houston  
BRIAN C. WAHLER  
Mayor of Piscataway  
ACQUANETTA WARREN  
Mayor of Fontana

CEO and Executive Director  
TOM COCHRAN

March 13, 2019

Senator Elizabeth Warren  
309 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Warren:

America's cities are in the midst of an affordable housing crisis. Rents are skyrocketing, squeezing the budgets of too many families, pushing them to the brink. As mayors, we are on the ground confronting these issues every day. We write to support the American Housing and Economic Mobility Act. This bill will make housing more affordable in our cities and it will start to address the legacy of discrimination that has held back so many of our neighbors.

Last year, rents in many of our cities hit record highs. Across the country, 38% of renters spent more than 30% of their income on rent. And while housing costs are the biggest expense for most citizens, those with the least suffer the most. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, every single county in the country has a shortage of housing affordable to extremely low-income renters.

The American Housing and Economic Mobility Act makes a historic investment in affordable housing. According to an independent economic analysis, it will produce more than 3 million new units, create 1.5 million new jobs, and bring down rents by 10 percent over the next 10 years. We appreciate that the bill also includes dedicated funding for housing in rural and Native communities, where the need for affordable housing is just as great. Easing the burden of rent costs will help the families we serve but will also allow our cities to grow by ensuring our residents are able to invest in their own economic futures by going to school or starting a small business.

In many of our cities, the effects of housing discrimination is obvious. In the middle of the last century, neighborhoods where African Americans and other marginalized communities lived were deliberately redlined and excluded from Federal government mortgage programs that built the white middle class. Decades later, these same communities were targeted with the most abusive financial products in the lead up to the financial crisis. As a result, 75 percent of these formerly redlined communities are still low income and two thirds are still minority communities, according to a recent study by the National Community Reinvestment Coalition.

Your bill provides the resources necessary to confront this history head on. The down payment assistance program targeted at residents of formerly redlined areas will help

families buy homes and build wealth, and the funds made available to families still struggling with their mortgages ten years after the financial crisis will help our cities finally turn the page on that dark chapter. Proposed changes to the Community Reinvestment Act will fortify and strengthen what is already a vital tool for driving banking services into our low- and moderate- income communities. We also especially applaud the extension of the Fair Housing Act to protect our citizens from housing discrimination based on veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, and source of income. Nobody should be denied a home because they served our country, because of who they are or who they love, or based on how they make ends meet.

As Mayors we see the effect of the lack of affordable housing in our budgets for city services. But as citizens who live in the cities we lead, we see our neighbors struggle under the burden of housing costs and feel the urgency for bold action and investment. We look forward to working with you to provide affordable housing for our citizens.

Sincerely,



Steve Benjamin  
Mayor of Columbia, SC  
President  
The U.S. Conference of  
Mayors



Keisha Lance Bottoms  
Mayor of Atlanta  
Chair, Community  
Development and  
Housing  
The U.S. Conference  
of Mayors



Tom Cochran  
CEO and Executive  
Director  
The U.S. Conference of  
Mayors