



Legislation Text

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Clerk 04/28/2005

A MOTION urging Congress to provide full funding for housing, economic development and human services programs in the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development through the Community Development Block Grant program, Section 8 housing vouchers and local public housing authorities.

WHEREAS, , the Community Development Block Grant ("CDBG") program, enacted into law in 1974, is the principal federal program providing grants to states, cities, and towns to devise neighborhood approaches for improving the physical, economic and social conditions that exist in their communities, and

WHEREAS, the CDBG program provides King County with over twenty-four million dollars annually and leverages additional resources to support vital programs and services such as food, shelter, housing, health services, child care and employment, which meet the needs of this county's most vulnerable residents, including seniors, people with disabilities and families, enabling them to meet their critical housing and human services needs, and

WHEREAS, King County and its cities have utilized CDBG allocations for numerous housing related programs including housing development, shelter, homeless prevention, home repair, access modifications and housing services, and

WHEREAS, King County and its cities have utilized CDBG allocations for human services such as child care, health care, domestic violence services, senior services, youth services, recreation, employment, counseling, emergency services and emergency food, and

WHEREAS, King County and its cities have utilized CDBG allocations for public improvements

including water systems, sidewalks and other public infrastructure in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods and improved access to public infrastructure for persons with disabilities by removal of architectural barriers, and

WHEREAS, King County and its cities have utilized CDBG allocations for acquisition and rehabilitation of senior centers, youth centers, neighborhood facilities, child care centers, health facilities and historic preservation including technical assistance and contract management for community facility projects such as roof replacement, heating and electrical improvements and handicapped accessibility for community facilities to aid in their delivery of social service programs to low and moderate-income clients, and

WHEREAS, starting in 2002 the federal government began reducing funding for CDBG funds allocated to state and local governments, a trend that has caused concern for state and local agencies that are able to utilize the funding for important community projects, and

WHEREAS, the elimination of the CDBG program or significant reduction in funding of this program would have dire consequences for the county's low- and moderate-income residents and the quality of life for all residents, and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress has signaled its intentions to preserve the CDBG program by including amendments in the Senate and House of Representatives budget resolutions, but has not concluded the budget process and is contemplating reducing the overall budget for the Department of Housing and Urban Development by as much as eleven percent, and

WHEREAS, reductions in federal allocations to public housing authorities and federal rule changes are already forcing local housing authorities for the first time in decades, to reduce the number of families they serve, and

WHEREAS, the federal office of management and budget has projected a thirty percent reduction in funding for the Housing Choice Voucher program, more commonly known as the Section 8 program, over the next five years, and

WHEREAS, the Section 8 program serves over fifteen thousand households in King County and more than fifty-two thousand people in Seattle and King County receive rental assistance through public housing or Section 8 housing programs, yet over ten thousand people remain on waiting lists for vouchers, and

WHEREAS, over forty-seven percent of Section 8 households are either elderly or disable and the largest group of clients served by Section 8 is children, and

WHEREAS, local financial resources do not exist to provide an alternative source of subsidy for these vital services, and

WHEREAS, progress in meeting the affordable housing needs of low- and moderate-income households and initiating the region's ten year plan to end homelessness will be jeopardized as core housing programs are affected by federal budget reductions, thereby resulting in more homeless, not fewer, and

WHEREAS, it is significantly more cost-effective for local, state and federal governments to ensure families and individuals have affordable housing choices and therefore never enter the cycle of homelessness, and

WHEREAS, the ability of government to partner with local builders, rental housing owners and nonprofit housing developers to provide affordable housing choices in King County will be significantly reduced if there continue to be reductions in funding for the CDBG program, Section 8 housing vouchers and public housing authorities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

The King County council respectfully urges the United States Congress to preserve and maintain the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant ("CDBG") program by enacting a fiscal year 2006 budget and appropriations package that funds CDBG formula grants at no less than four billion three hundred fifty million dollars and preferably at four billion seven hundred million dollars to restore the unwarranted cuts made to the program in fiscal year 2005.

Further, the King County council urges Congress to maintain CDBG funding

while doing no harm to other critical housing programs including funding for Section 8 vouchers and public housing authorities.