



ASSOCIATION OF
ALASKA HOUSING AUTHORITIES



C.O.L.T.
COALITION OF LARGE TRIBES



GPTCA



HAC

Housing Assistance Council

Building communities, empowering Alaskans.



National American Indian Housing Council



NCAI
National Congress of American Indians



UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC.
Established 1969



UNITED NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSING ASSOCIATION
1985



NWIHA
NORTHWEST INDIAN
HOUSING ASSOCIATION



National NeighborWorks®
Association

September 16, 2024

Hon. Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Reauthorization of the *Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act*

Dear Leaders Schumer and McConnell, Speaker Johnson and Leader Jeffries:

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC) and the undersigned organizations urge you to take action to reauthorize the *Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act* (NAHASDA) as part of the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025*, by including SA 2240 filed by Senators Schatz (D-HI) and Murkowski (R-AK).

In 2023, a similar amendment was included in the Senate version of the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024* by an overwhelming floor vote of 86-11. While discussed in the bill's conference proceedings, the NAHASDA reauthorization was removed and did not become law.

The unfortunate fact is that Congress has not acted on a NAHASDA reauthorization since 2007 and, while the program receives an annual appropriation, key reforms to the NAHASDA program have not been made, and the underlying statute has been unauthorized since 2013.

Action on this key Indian housing program is long past due, and SA 2240 would ensure that provisions are enacted into law to assist Indian veterans with rental assistance, to streamline environmental reviews, to eliminate barriers to funding for homeless veterans, to establish a drug elimination program, and to improve home loan guarantee programs.

Housing is fundamental to increasing economic mobility and improving physical and mental well-being. Poverty, health, and suicide still remain significant challenges in American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities, with one in six AI/AN families living in poverty,¹ AI/AN's consistently having the lowest life expectancy compared to other groups,² and suicide being a major cause of death in AI/AN communities.³ Improving housing infrastructure can impact socioeconomic and health factors for Native Americans to create a secure and thriving America.

In conclusion, we urge you to support SA 2240 in the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025*.

Should you have any questions, please contact Larry Wright Jr., Executive Director of NCAI, by email at lwrightjr@ncai.org or Douglas Marconi Sr., Executive Director of NAIHC at dmarconi@naihc.net.

Sincerely,

Association of Alaska Housing Authorities

Coalition of Large Tribes

Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Association

Housing Assistance Council

National American Indian Housing Council

National Congress of American Indians

National NeighborWorks Association

Northwest Indian Housing Association

United Native American Housing Association

United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund

cc: Members, Senate Committee on Armed Services
Members, Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
Members, House Committee on Financial Services
Members, House Committee on Natural Resources

¹ Senate Joint Economic Committee - Democrats. Link here: https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/9a6bd201-d9ed-4615-bc32-9b899faf5627/nativeamericanscontinuetofacepervasiveeconomicdisparaties-final.pdf.

² National Center for Health Statistics. Link here: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/vsrr/vsrr023.pdf>.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Link here: <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/mental-and-behavioral-health-american-indiansalaska-natives>.