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CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES

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State-by-State Fact Sheet Attached

HOUSE BILL WOULD CUT 125,000 VOUCHERS FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

A bill recently approved by the House Appropriations Committee would seriously damage the main federal program that helps low-income families rent housing on the open market, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Millions of Americans are already living in inadequate housing or paying too much of their incomes for housing this holiday season. Congress will worsen this situation if it approves the House bill when it returns in January.

"The House bill would harm a program that been proven to be highly effective in meeting the housing needs of low-income families," said Barbara Sard of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. "These changes are especially ill-timed in light of the large need for assistance and the impressive improvements that the program has made in recent years."

As shown on the following fact sheet, communities in all parts of the country could expect to lose housing assistance if the changes approved by the Committee on October 9 are adopted. The House FY2003 appropriations bill for HUD and other agencies would cut $938 million from the President's budget for the housing voucher program. Generally called "Section 8" or, more recently, the Housing Choice Voucher Program, the program provides families with vouchers to defray part of the cost of renting housing on the open market. This reduction would result in the loss of more than 125,000 vouchers below the 2002 level and would break the federal government's longstanding commitment to renew all existing vouchers.

The bulk of the funding cut in the House bill would come from providing local housing agencies with funds only for the number of vouchers they were using at a point in the past.

This is inadequate because agencies are using a greater share of their vouchers now than in previous years: New findings show that the percentage of housing vouchers in use grew from 91 percent in the previous year to 97 percent currently.[1] (Vouchers go unused if the families that are awarded them are unable to use them to rent housing due to lack of available housing or for some other reason.) This major improvement in voucher program performance reflects a series of reforms made in the program in recent years by Congress, HUD, and local housing agencies.

As the bipartisan, Congressionally-chartered Millennial Housing Commission concluded in a recent report, the voucher program is "flexible, cost-effective, and successful in its mission," and should be a "linchpin" of national housing policy.

[1] From a survey conducted by the Council of Large Public Housing Agencies, the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, the National Leased Housing Association, and the Public Housing Authorities Directors Association. Nationally, 344 housing agencies responded to the survey.

Families Face Severe Housing Needs

The federal voucher program is especially important given the tightening housing squeeze on low-income families. Census data show that in 1999 more than five million low-income renter households who did not receive housing assistance either paid more than half of their income for rent and utilities or lived in severely substandard housing. Most of the low-income families (as distinguished from elderly and disabled individuals) that face these severe housing needs are working families.

Across the country on average, full-time workers must earn $14.66 per hour to be able to afford a modest two-bedroom rental home without spending more than 30 percent of their income on rent and utilities, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC). *With the exception of Puerto Rico, there is nowhere in the United States where a person earning the minimum wage could afford to rent even a one-bedroom apartment.*

"This threat to the voucher program is without precedent and unconscionable at a time when the need for federal housing assistance is at a record high," said NLIHC President Sheila Crowley.

Congress could protect the low-income families assisted by housing vouchers — and the tens of thousands of additional households on waiting lists for vouchers — by funding the program at the level provided in the President's budget. In addition, Congress could build on the program's recent success by enacting further reforms contained in legislation introduced this year by Senator Christopher Bond (R-MO), Senator Paul Sarbanes (D-MD), and Representative Marge Roukema (R-NJ).

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For additional information on the changes approved by the House Appropriations Committee, see *House Appropriations Bill Would Jeopardize Access to Housing Vouchers for Low-Income Families,* available at <http://www.cbpp.org/10-9-02hous.htm>.

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ESTIMATED LOSS OF VOUCHERS IN EACH STATE UNDER HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS BILL

This fact sheet estimates the impact that the changes to the voucher program approved by the House Appropriations Committee would have in each of the fifty states. The fact sheet also contains examples of the estimated number of vouchers that would be lost in particular communities. Data are available concerning some additional communities in each state that are not listed here. For information on how these estimates were derived, see the Description of Sources and Methods following the individual state listings.

Alabama

- The state as a whole **would lose between 400 and 1,050 vouchers**, or between 1 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Boaz** would lose 20 vouchers.
- Currently, 98 percent of vouchers in Alabama communities for which data are available are in use, up from 95 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Alaska

- The state as a whole **would lose an estimated 250 vouchers**, 6 percent of its total vouchers.
- The **Alaska Housing Finance Corporation,** the only voucher administrator in Alaska, would lose 250 vouchers.
- Currently, 94 percent of vouchers in Alaska are in use, down from 101 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Arizona

- The state as a whole **would lose between 200 and 760 vouchers**, or between 1 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Tempe*** would lose 35 vouchers.
- Currently, 101 percent of vouchers in Arizona communities for which data are available are in use, up from 99 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Arkansas

- The state as a whole **would lose between 760 and 850 vouchers**, or between 3 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Polk County** would lose 50 vouchers.
- Currently, 97 percent of vouchers in Arkansas communities for which data are available are in use, up from 95 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

California

- The state as a whole **would lose between 11,360 and 12,540 vouchers**, or about 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- The **City of Los Angeles*** would lose 2,850 vouchers and **Oakland*** would lose 600.
- Other California communities that would lose a large number of vouchers include **Berkeley** (440), **Long Beach** (420), **San Jose** (350), the **City of Santa Barbara** (310), **Monterey County** (250), and the **City of Alameda** (110).
- Currently, 98 percent of vouchers in California communities for which data are available are in use, up from 88 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Colorado

- The state as a whole **would lose between 280 and 1,050 vouchers**, or between 1 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Colorado Springs*** would lose 40 vouchers.
- Currently, 101 percent of vouchers in Colorado communities for which data are available are in use, up from 94 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Connecticut

- The state as a whole **would lose between 1,280 and 1,740 vouchers**, or between 4 percent and 5 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Stratford** would lose 95 vouchers, **Stamford*** would lose 55, and **Hartford** would lose 40.
- Currently, 95 percent of vouchers in Connecticut communities for which data are available are in use, up from 83 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Delaware

- The state as a whole **would lose approximately 170 vouchers**, or about 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Newark** would lose 50 vouchers.

Florida

- The state as a whole **would lose between 3,380 and 3,500 vouchers**, or about 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Miami Beach*** would lose 350 vouchers, **Broward County*** would lose 180, **Pensacola** would lose 60, and **Clearwater** would lose 50.
- Currently, 96 percent of vouchers in Florida communities for which data are available are in use, up from 89 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Georgia

- The state as a whole **would lose between 1,090 and 1,790 vouchers**, or between 2 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Atlanta*** would lose 350 vouchers and the **Georgia Department of Community Affairs*** would lose 315.
- Currently, 98 percent of vouchers in Georgia communities for which data are available are in use, up from 96 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Hawaii

- The state as a whole **would lose between 450 and 720 vouchers**, or between 4 percent and 6 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Maui County*** would lose 70 vouchers.
- Currently, 94 percent of vouchers in Hawaii communities for which data are available are in use, up from 89 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Idaho

- The state as a whole **would lose between 180 and 240 vouchers**, or between 3 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Boise*** would lose 75 vouchers and **Ada County*** would lose 55 vouchers.
- Currently, 99 percent of vouchers in Idaho communities for which data are available are in use, up from 98 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Illinois

- The state as a whole **would lose between 1,570 and 3,180 vouchers**, or between 2 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Cook County** would lose 230 vouchers.
- Currently, 98 percent of vouchers in Illinois communities for which data are available are in use, up from 93 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Indiana

- The state as a whole **would lose between 1,380 and 3,650 vouchers**, or between 4 percent and 10 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Indianapolis** would lose 485 vouchers.
- Currently, 90 percent of vouchers in Indiana communities for which data are available are in use, up from 77 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Iowa

- The state as a whole **would lose between 600 and 810 vouchers**, or between 3 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Waterloo** would lose 75 vouchers, **Des Moines*** would lose 50 vouchers, and **Council Bluffs*** would lose 35 vouchers.
- Currently, 98 percent of vouchers in Iowa communities for which data are available are in use, up from 90 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Kansas

- The state as a whole **would lose between 320 and 400 vouchers**, or between 3 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Olathe** would lose 25 vouchers and **Atchison** would lose 20 vouchers.
- Currently, 98 percent of vouchers in Kansas communities for which data are available are in use, up from 88 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Kentucky

- The state as a whole **would lose approximately 1,180 vouchers**, or about 4 percent of its total vouchers.

Louisiana

- The state as a whole **would lose between 1,090 and 1,380 vouchers**, or between 3 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Monroe** would lose 45 vouchers.
- Currently, 97 percent of vouchers in Louisiana communities for which data are available are in use, up from 95 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Maine

- The state as a whole **would lose between 100 and 470 vouchers**, or between 1 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Auburn** would lose 15 vouchers and **Bangor** would lose 10 vouchers.
- Currently, 100 percent of vouchers in Maine communities for which data are available are in use, up from 98 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Maryland

- The state as a whole **would lose between 1,600 and 6,400 vouchers**, or between 4 percent and 15 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Baltimore*** would lose 1,925 vouchers, **Anne Arundel County** would lose 175, and the **Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development*** would lose 195.
- Currently, 85 percent of vouchers in Maryland communities for which data are available are in use, up from 80 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Massachusetts

- The state as a whole **would lose between 1,530 and 2,730 vouchers**, or between 2 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Boston*** would lose 215 vouchers and the **Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development*** would lose 345.
- Currently, 98 percent of vouchers in Massachusetts communities for which data are available are in use, up from 92 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Michigan

- The state as a whole **would lose between 570 and 1,690 vouchers**, or between 1 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Ann Arbor*** would lose 95 vouchers and the **Michigan Housing Development Authority*** would lose 185 vouchers.
- Currently, 99 percent of vouchers in Michigan communities for which data are available are in use, up from 93 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Minnesota

- The state as a whole **would lose between 330 and 1,120 vouchers**, or between 1 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Minneapolis*** would lose 45 vouchers and **Dakota County** would lose 20 vouchers.
- Currently, 99 percent of vouchers in Minnesota communities for which data are available are in use, up from 93 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Mississippi

- The state as a whole **would lose between 650 and 1,260 vouchers**, or between 4 percent and 7 percent of its total vouchers.
- The **Region V Housing Authority** would lose 180 vouchers and the **Region VI Housing Authority*** would lose 350 vouchers.
- Currently, 93 percent of vouchers in Mississippi communities for which data are available are in use, up from 92 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Missouri

- The state as a whole **would lose between 1,330 and 1,550 vouchers**, or between 3 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Kansas City*** would lose 295 vouchers and **St. Louis County*** would lose 180 vouchers.
- Currently, 97 percent of vouchers in Missouri communities for which data are available are in use, up from 88 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Montana

- The state as a whole **would lose approximately 220 vouchers**, or about 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- Currently, 97 percent of vouchers in Montana communities for which data are available are in use, up from 93 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Nebraska

- The state as a whole **would lose between 280 and 430 vouchers**, or between 2 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- Currently, 98 percent of vouchers in Nebraska communities for which data are available are in use, the same percentage as the last completed fiscal year.

Nevada

- The state as a whole **would lose between 10 and 440 vouchers**, or between less than 1 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- Currently, 101 percent of vouchers in Nevada communities for which data are available are in use, up from 100 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

New Hampshire

- The state as a whole **would lose between 330 and 350 vouchers**, or about 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Manchester** would lose 180 vouchers.
- Currently, 98 percent of vouchers in New Hampshire communities for which data are available are in use, up from 93 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

New Jersey

- The state as a whole **would lose between 620 and 2,480 vouchers**, or between 1 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Camden** would lose 130 vouchers, **Union City** would lose 30, and **Gloucester County** would lose 35.
- Currently, 102 percent of vouchers in New Jersey communities for which data are available are in use, up from 94 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

New Mexico

- The state as a whole **would lose between 0 and 510 vouchers**, or between 0 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- Currently, 100 percent of vouchers in New Mexico communities for which data are available are in use, up from 99 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

New York

- The state as a whole **would lose between 7,580 and 8,810 vouchers**, or about 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- The **New York City Housing Authority*** would lose 3,035 vouchers, **Rochester*** would lose 920, and **Syracuse*** would lose 295.
- Currently, 96 percent of vouchers in New York communities for which data are available are in use, up from 93 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

North Carolina

- The state as a whole **would lose an estimated 2,050 vouchers**, or 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **High Point** would lose 75 vouchers, and **Asheboro** would lose 65 vouchers.
- Currently, 96 percent of vouchers in North Carolina communities for which data are available are in use, up from 92 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

North Dakota

- The state as a whole **would lose between 30 and 290 vouchers**, or between less than 1 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Stutsman County*** would lose 15 vouchers.
- Currently, 101 percent of vouchers in North Dakota communities for which data are available are in use, up from 97 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Ohio

- The state as a whole **would lose between 1,030 and 3,200 vouchers**, or between 1 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Hamilton County** would lose 170 vouchers and **Mansfield** would lose 85.
- Other Ohio communities that would lose a large number of vouchers include **Cuyahoga County** (75), **Portage County*** (40), **Erie County** (40), **Dayton** (35), and **Springfield** (30).
- Currently, 100 percent of vouchers in Ohio communities for which data are available are in use, up from 93 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Oklahoma

- The state as a whole **would lose between 880 and 1,090 vouchers**, or between 4 percent and 5 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Oklahoma City*** would lose 390 vouchers.
- Currently, 96 percent of vouchers in Oklahoma communities for which data are available are in use, up from 83 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Oregon

- The state as a whole **would lose between 300 and 1,190 vouchers**, or between 1 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **West Valley Housing Authority** would lose 50 vouchers, and the **Klamath Housing Authority** would lose 20.
- Currently, 99 percent of vouchers in Oregon communities for which data are available are in use, down from 101 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Pennsylvania

- The state as a whole **would lose between 3,030 and 11,040 vouchers**, or between 4 percent and 14 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Philadelphia* would lose 3,315 vouchers** and **Delaware County** would lose 250 vouchers.
- Currently, 86 percent of vouchers in Pennsylvania communities for which data are available are in use, up from 81 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Rhode Island

- The state as a whole **would lose between 350 and 590 vouchers**, or between 4 percent and 6 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Rhode Island Housing Mortgage Finance Corporation*** would lose 200 vouchers.
- Currently, 94 percent of vouchers in Rhode Island communities for which data are available are in use, up from 86 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

South Carolina

- The state as a whole **would lose between 390 and 900 vouchers**, or between 2 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Rock Hill** would lose 20 vouchers.
- Currently, 99 percent of vouchers in South Carolina communities for which data are available are in use, up from 97 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

South Dakota

- The state as a whole **would lose between 170 and 220 vouchers**, or between 3 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Yankton** would lose 10 vouchers.
- Currently, 98 percent of vouchers in South Dakota communities for which data are available are in use, up from 73 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Tennessee

- The state as a whole **would lose between 1,140 and 1,300 vouchers**, or about 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Knoxville*** would lose 330 vouchers.
- Currently, 96 percent of vouchers in Tennessee communities for which data are available are in use, up from 95 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Texas

- The state as a whole **would lose between 5,280 and 6,880 vouchers**, or between 4 percent and 5 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Houston*** would lose 1,685 vouchers and **Fort Worth** would lose 190.
- Currently, 95 percent of vouchers in Texas communities for which data are available are in use, up from 92 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Utah

- The state as a whole **would lose between 110 and 400 vouchers**, or between 1 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Salt Lake City*** would lose 20 vouchers.
- Currently, 99 percent of vouchers in Utah communities for which data are available are in use, up from 89 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Vermont

- The state as a whole **would lose between 80 and 230 vouchers**, or between 1 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- The **Vermont State Housing Authority*** would lose 65 vouchers.
- Currently, 99 percent of vouchers in Vermont communities for which data are available are in use, up from 97 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Virginia

- The state as a whole **would lose between 1,670 and 3,290 vouchers**, or between 4 percent and 7 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Virginia Beach** would lose 300 vouchers, **Richmond*** would lose 300 vouchers, and **Hampton** would lose 295.
- Other Virginia communities that would lose a large number of vouchers include **Suffolk*** (110), **Chesapeake*** (95), **Norfolk** (80), and **Newport News** (45).
- Currently, 93 percent of vouchers in Virginia communities for which data are available are in use, up from 88 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Washington

- The state as a whole **would lose between 360 and 1,530 vouchers**, or between 1 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Pierce County*** would lose 50 vouchers, and **Thurston County*** would lose 85.
- Currently, 99 percent of vouchers in Washington communities for which data are available are in use, up from 93 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

West Virginia

- The state as a whole **would lose between 70 and 570 vouchers**, or between 1 percent and 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Wheeling** and **Greenbrier County** would each lose 15 vouchers.
- Currently, 100 percent of vouchers in West Virginia communities for which data are available are in use, up from 94 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Wisconsin

- The state as a whole **would lose between 1,060 and 1,350 vouchers**, or between 4 percent and 5 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Brown County*** would lose 230 vouchers, **Kenosha** would lose 75, and **Dane County** would lose 20.
- Currently, 95 percent of vouchers in Wisconsin communities for which data are available are in use, up from 89 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Wyoming

- The state as a whole **would lose between 100 and 110 vouchers**, or about 4 percent of its total vouchers.
- **Cheyenne*** would lose 60 vouchers.
- Currently, 96 percent of vouchers in Wyoming communities for which data are available are in use, up from 91 percent in the last completed fiscal year.

Description of Sources and Methods

The data in this fact sheet are based on a survey of local housing agencies conducted by the Council of Large Public Housing Agencies, the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, the National Leased Housing Association, and the Public Housing Authorities Directors Association during October and November 2002. A total of 344 agencies responded to the survey (out of approximately 2,600 that administer the voucher program). These agencies administer approximately 36 percent of the total number of housing vouchers available nationally.

Percent of vouchers in use. The utilization rates reported here represent the percentage of authorized vouchers actually being used by families to help pay their rent, as reported by the local housing agencies that responded to the survey. Utilization rates fell substantially during the late 1990s, when many parts of the country experienced tight housing markets. Voucher utilization rates have generally risen since 2001, apparently due to program improvements and looser housing markets that have resulted from the weakening economy.

In some cases, utilization rates reported here are greater than 100 percent. This reflects short-term overuse of vouchers that can result from the practice of “overissuance.” Because not all families that are issued vouchers are able to use them, the voucher program permits local housing agencies to overissue vouchers in the same way that an airline overissues tickets. In other words, if one out of every five families typically is unable to rent housing with the vouchers an agency issues, the agency can issue five vouchers for every four vouchers it has available funds to support. If more families than expected are able to use their vouchers, the agency’s utilization rate may temporarily exceed 100 percent.

Number of vouchers that would be lost. This fact sheet contains estimates of the total number of vouchers that would be lost in each state under the House bill’s funding formula. The House bill bases future funding for the voucher program on the average number of vouchers that were in use during a local housing agency's last completed fiscal year. Because housing agencies have different funding cycles, this funding formula would have different effects on different agencies; in some cases funding would be based on data from the period 5 – 16 months earlier, while in others it would based on two-year old data. The estimates used here are based on the most recent voucher utilization data available.

It should be noted that the methods used to develop the estimates in this fact sheet were conservative. The funding provided by the House bill appears to be inadequate to fund even the reduced number of vouchers that we estimate would be eligible for funding under the language of the House bill, and as a result it is likely that further cuts would be necessary. It is impossible, however, to determine which states would lose additional vouchers beyond the number estimated here, due to insufficient appropriations.

For most states, the estimate of the number of vouchers that would be lost is actually a range between two estimates based on different methodologies. One of these estimates assumes that the state will lose vouchers at the same rate as the local housing agencies in the state that responded to the survey, while the other assumes that the state would lose vouchers at the rate at which vouchers would be lost across all agencies that responded to the survey nationally. In the three states where there were no survey responses (Kentucky) or where the responses covered fewer than 1,000 vouchers (Delaware and Montana), the projections are based only on the national rate. In the one state with only one agency administering housing vouchers, Alaska, information is given solely for the responding agency. For most states there are examples of the number of vouchers that would be lost in particular communities. These estimates are derived from the administering agency's reported current rate of voucher use and total number of vouchers. For purposes of these estimates, the total number of vouchers in each state is based on HUD data for individual housing agencies from the HUDCAPS system, accessed November 25 -27, 2002, and available at <https://pic.hud.gov/pic/haprofiles/haprofilelist.asp>.

Some of the vouchers that we estimate will be lost in each state are not currently being used. It is impossible to predict how many of these vouchers would be used in 2003 if Congress maintained the current funding system rather than adopting the methodology in the House bill. Because voucher use has been rising nationally and demand for housing vouchers far exceeds the supply in every state, all of the vouchers that would be lost under the House bill could be used by the agencies that currently administer them or by other agencies in the state.

* For some local housing agencies, HUD records show that the agency has been allocated a different number of vouchers (in most cases, more vouchers) than the agency reported in the survey. The estimates of loss listed here are based on the number of vouchers reported by the agency. Communities for which the number of vouchers reported by the agency was substantially different from the number shown by HUD records are marked with an asterisk (*).