



## FIRST FOCUS

### CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN

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May 27, 2015

The Honorable Al Franken  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Angus King  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rob Portman  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Franken, Senator Portman, Senator Collins, Senator King, and Senator Murray:

I am writing on behalf of First Focus Campaign for Children, a bipartisan advocacy organization committed to making children and their families a priority in federal policy and budget decisions, to thank you for your leadership in reintroducing the Housing for Homeless Students Act of 2015 (S. 1412) to amend the Internal Revenue Code to qualify homeless or previously homeless youth and veterans for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) while pursuing their education full-time.

As an organization committed to securing a bright future for homeless children and youth, we applaud efforts to help those battling homelessness to pursue an education and escape homelessness and poverty as adults.

According to the Department of Education, there were over 1.2 million homeless children and youth enrolled in public school last year. Currently, homeless youth, or those who have experienced homelessness in the past, who attend a four-year college or university full-time cannot take advantage of housing built with funds from the Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) Program due to the “student rule”.

This “student rule” was put in place to prevent LIHTC dollars from being used to build dormitories, as well as to prevent college students with temporarily low incomes from taking advantage of resources reserved for individuals and families with more serious housing needs. However, homeless and previously homeless youth experience unique housing needs and lack the access to housing and financial resources that many other college students have available to them through their families.

This legislation would amend the Internal Revenue Code by changing the “student rule” in the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program to allow homeless and formerly homeless youth who are attending a college or university full-time to qualify for housing built with these low-income housing tax credits. These populations would now be exempted from the “student rule”, along with former foster youth, single parents, and parents receiving public assistance.

Allowing homeless and previously homeless youth who attend college to access LIHTC housing would be a significant step towards helping to ensure that these youth do not have to choose between pursuing an education and having a roof over their head.

We are grateful for your leadership in introducing this legislation, and we welcome the opportunity to work with you on this and other proposals to improve the well being of America’s children and youth.

Sincerely,

Bruce Lesley