



**Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee
Testimony in Support of SJR70, Federal Housing Funding
Monday, May 9, 2022**

Good morning, Chairperson Singleton and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Matthew Hersh, Director of Policy and Advocacy the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey. The Network is the statewide association of nearly 300 community development corporations, individuals and other organizations that support the creation of affordable homes, economic opportunities, and strong communities. The Network is also the state's largest, funded HUD-certified housing counseling intermediary serving NJ exclusively.

Speaker Coughlin has identified food insecurity and affordable housing as key focus areas in this new legislative session. As such, the Network has identified programs that would address those goals, using federal funds to bolster essential state housing programs that increase affordable home production, prevent homelessness, and reduce housing instability.

These federal funds identified in SJR170 would fulfill our federal government's obligation to create healthy and affordable homes, expand rental assistance, and help to close the racial wealth gap in NJ.

By supporting this resolution, the NJ state legislature would join most of the state's Congressional delegation in calling on the following historic, essential housing investments in any Congressional budget reconciliation bill:

- \$25 billion expansion in rental assistance to serve 300,000 additional households;
- \$65 billion to repair public housing, which is home to 2.5 million residents;
- \$15 billion in the national Housing Trust Fund to build and preserve 150,000 homes affordable to people with the greatest needs.

Securing historic and essential housing investments is part of the Network's [HouseNJ](#) campaign, which also calls on protecting and expanding the state Affordable Housing Trust Fund, increase the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit, strengthen rental assistance and homelessness prevention efforts, and remove barriers to housing access and increase housing security.

HouseNJ includes a legislative agenda that removes institutional barriers that have historically prevented people from finding an affordable home. These barriers include one's credit score, the complicated application process of securing an affordable home or housing assistance, and the inability for local nonprofits and residents to acquire properties for affordable homes.

These key pieces of legislation are in motion and the Network looks forward to working with all of you to HouseNJ and to create a more affordable New Jersey for all.

Matthew Hersh
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Housing and Community Development Network of NJ