March 27, 2018

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Chairman, House Ways and Means Committee
1011 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Support of H.R. 5045 (STOP Homelessness Act of 2018)

Dear Representative Brady,

On behalf of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) Commission we write in strong support of H.R. 5045, the STOP Homelessness Act of 2018, which would create an option for taxpayers to make a voluntary donation on their tax return to support efforts to end homelessness.

LAHSA is a joint-powers authority of the City and County of Los Angeles, and serves as the lead agency in the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (LACoC). LAHSA is responsible for funding a significant portion of the interim housing, permanent housing, and supportive services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County.

Within Los Angeles County, there were just under 58,000 persons experiencing homelessness in 2017, a 23% increase from the prior year. Nationally, there were 553,742 persons experiencing homelessness in 2017, a 1% increase from the prior year and the first increase in national homelessness in seven years.

Los Angeles County has shown that increased resources and strategic focus reduce homelessness. In recent years, veteran and family homelessness declined with an increase of dedicated resources. In 2016, Los Angeles County devoted additional resources to funding and subsidizing housing units that were set-aside for families and veterans experiencing homelessness, as well as increasing outreach, case management, and housing navigation services for these populations. As a result, the number of families experiencing homelessness fell by 18% from the prior year, while the number of veterans experiencing homelessness fell by 41%.

We believe that H.R. 5045 can build on existing successes and ensure more people have access to safe, stable, and affordable homes. To this end, the funding generated by H.R. 5045 should augment the efforts of existing programs. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), has a proven track record of providing resources to local Continua of Care (CoCs) that carry out the work of connecting people experiencing homelessness to a range of housing resources.

Funding from H.R. 5045 should add to the McKinney-Vento program’s resources without reducing Congress’ ongoing allocations. Additional funding to the McKinney-Vento program could assist CoCs to increase their available housing resources. More resources to CoCs could lead to:
• Emergency shelter beds for families, youth, and single adults
• Supportive housing units for persons with disabilities, families with children, or others in need of a stable housing unit and accompanying supportive services
• Rental assistance for persons with disabilities

We appreciate your consideration of this bill that would allow greater access to opportunity and dignity for people experiencing homelessness. We look forward to working with you in that endeavor.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Peter Lynn
Executive Director