

REP GILBERT R. CISNEROS, JR.
FY 2020 THUD MEMBER DAY TESTIMONY

Chairman Price, Ranking Member Diaz Balart, and members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, thank you for allowing me this opportunity to provide input on the FY 2020 Appropriations process on behalf of the residents of California's 39th Congressional District.

I am here today to encourage you to once again reject on a bipartisan basis the damaging cuts to transportation and housing funding proposed in the President's FY 2020 budget request. My district is one of many across this nation that relies on federal funding for local infrastructure projects to advance our economy and housing programs to support our most vulnerable. Today, I want to highlight just a few examples of the programs in the 39th that deserve your attention.

Among the many highway funding streams under your jurisdiction, I urge you to provide increased funding for the INFRA discretionary grant program. My district is home to a major trade corridor along California State Routes 57 and 60. Stakeholders in my district have been working to advance the 57/60 Confluence Chokepoint Relief Project for over a decade. This month, I sent a bipartisan letter with nine of my regional colleagues in support of the community's second application for an INFRA grant after their application was rejected last year. I have met with local officials who highlighted that in the past year, the total cost of the project has increased due to the delayed start date and recent changes in trade policies. Strong funding levels for the INFRA grant program will ensure this project is competitive and completed.

Additionally, I urge you to provide strong funding levels for the Low or No Emission Vehicle Program under the Federal Transit Administration. I have heard from transit entities across my district who are working to meet the statewide goal of reaching 100 percent zero-emission bus fleets by 2040. The so-called "Low-No" bus program will help transit systems in my district transition their fleets to the lowest polluting and most energy efficient vehicles.

Further, I hope you will ensure robust funding for rail infrastructure programs, including BUILD Transportation grants and the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) pilot program. The City of Placentia in my district is proceeding with site planning and has secured local and state funding for a new MetroLink station. Federal funds through BUILD and TOD programming would ensure the timely completion of this project and associated economic development plans.

Regarding housing programs, I am extremely troubled that the President has proposed to eliminate key housing and community development programs, like the Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG). Since being sworn into office, I have met with representatives from every city in my district. In every single meeting, mayors, councilmembers, Democrats and Republicans, urged me to fight for increased funding for CDBG. Our cities need these funds to improve the quality of life for vulnerable populations. Chino Hills uses CDBG funding to support the House of Ruth, which serves domestic violence survivors who need shelter. Walnut uses these funds to support home renovations for special needs family members. Contrary to the President's budget, these programs are not "low value," and I hope you will reject his proposal.

I urge you to provide strong funding levels for homeless assistance programs. Across my district, housing issues stand out as one of the most pressing issues confronting my constituents.

Homelessness is on the rise and fast increasing rents are placing greater numbers of people in jeopardy of becoming homeless. In my district, a vigorous census of all our homeless neighbors and found that the HUD mandated point-in-time count undercounted homelessness by roughly 40 percent. I would urge the committee to encourage HUD to explore accepting more accurate measures of homeless in the allocation Federal funds to combat homelessness.

Finally, as a former Navy officer, I am outraged that the President has not requested funding for HUD-VASH in his budget request. It is deeply troubling to see my fellow veterans unable to find safe, comfortable housing. We owe it to them to do whatever we can to support local efforts to finally end veteran homelessness. I stand with Representatives Green, Lee, and Smith in calling for a return to the FY 2017 funding level for HUD-VASH, \$47 million and encourage this committee to heed this call.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. I know you have a tough job ahead of you given the constraints of the Budget Control Act. I hope you will keep these stories in mind as you craft the FY 2020 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Acts.