

SHEILA JACKSON LEE
18TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
2160 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-3816

DISTRICT OFFICE:
1919 SMITH STREET, SUITE 1180
THE GEORGE "MICKEY" LELAND FEDERAL BUILDING
HOUSTON, TX 77002
(713) 655-0050

ACRES HOME OFFICE:
6719 WEST MONTGOMERY, SUITE 204
HOUSTON, TX 77019
(713) 691-4882

HEIGHTS OFFICE:
420 WEST 19TH STREET
HOUSTON, TX 77008
(713) 861-4070

FIFTH WARD OFFICE:
3300 LYONS AVENUE, SUITE 301
HOUSTON, TX 77020

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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CONGRESSWOMAN SHEILA JACKSON LEE OF TEXAS

**STATEMENT BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING
AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED
AGENCIES**

**WEBEX VIRTUAL MEMBER DAY HEARING ON
TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN
DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR FY2022**

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THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2021

1:00 P.M.

SJL scheduled to testify at _____.m.

*Chairman Price, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart and distinguished
Members of the Subcommittee:*

As the Ranking Member of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime,
Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, let me offer my
appreciation and thanks to Chairman Price and Ranking Member

Diaz-Balart for the difficult work and choices that must be made to produce a truly bipartisan T-HUD spending bill, and for their commitment to producing a bill that fairly reflects the interests and priorities of the American people.

Mr. Chairman, I understand that my entire statement will be made part of the record so I will keep my remarks brief.

In the few minutes allotted I wish to highlight the transportation and housing programs which warrant the Committee's continuing attention and support.

I. TRANSPORTATION

I support \$2.0 billion for Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER GRANTS).

TIGER grants have helped to finance a wide variety of innovative projects building and repairing roads, bridges, public transit systems, ports, rail lines, and bicycle and pedestrian networks. Moreover, TIGER encourages cooperation between agencies and jurisdictions and often funds multi-modal, multi-jurisdictional projects that are difficult to support through traditional transportation programs.

I support \$2.5 billion for New Starts Program Funding.

The New Starts program provides funding for commuter rail, subway, light rail, ferries and bus rapid transit projects. New Starts transportation projects throughout the nation create jobs, spur economic development, ease congestion, expand our national

transportation network, and foster the development of safer, more livable communities.

I support robust funding for the Federal Transit Authority.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides grant funding to State, Local, and Tribal governments, public and private transit operators, and other recipients to support public transit infrastructure and operations. I support the strongest possible funding because access to transportation is a civil right and that full funding for transit is imperative in order to ensure that low-income and vulnerable communities have access to jobs, housing, grocery stores, and childcare, among other needs.

I support \$2.5 billion for the Amtrak Passenger Rail Service.

The \$2.5 billion in funding requested for the Passenger Rail Service will provide grants to Amtrak and state corridors to ensure passenger rail assets are maintained to provide safe and reliable life-cycle service, as well as to continue operating long-distance train services.

I support \$3.4 billion for Airport Improvement Program.

The Airport Improvement Program (AIP) provides grants to public agencies for the planning and development of public-use airports that are included in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems. Sponsors can use AIP funds on most airfield capital improvements or repairs and in some specific situations, for terminals, hangars, and non-aviation development.

HOUSING

I support \$5.0 billion for Community Development Block Grants

CDBG is the centerpiece of the federal government's efforts to help more than 1,100 cities, urban counties, and states meet the needs of low- and moderate-income communities. It has proven to be one of the most effective federal domestic programs in revitalizing communities.

I support full funding for Housing for the Elderly (Section 202) Capital Advance Program.

This funding facilitates construction, rehabilitation, or acquisition of structures that will serve as supportive housing for very low-income elderly persons. Section 202 provides rent subsidies for projects to help keep them affordable for these vulnerable populations.

I support \$1.75 billion for the HOME Investment Partnership Program

The HOME Investment Partnerships Program is the largest Federal block grant to state and local governments designed exclusively to produce affordable housing for low-income families. The requested funding will result in 14,014 units of affordable housing for new homebuyers; 13,264 units of newly constructed and rehabilitated affordable rental units; 6,576 units of owner-occupied rehabilitation for low-income homeowners; 7,799 low-income households assisted with HOME tenant-based rental assistance; and 533 affordable homeownership units with SHOP funds.

I support \$32 billion for Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program.

HUD's Section 8 programs help low-income elderly, families with children, and people with disabilities secure and maintain decent, affordable homes. In both urban and rural communities, Section 8 rental assistance provides the foundation for millions of individuals and families to live with dignity, maintain steady work, and improve the lives of their children.

I support \$57 million for Fair Housing Initiatives.

FHIP is a competitive grant program and is the primary source of funding for fair housing education and enforcement activities at the local level. Local fair housing organizations funded by FHIP protect the housing rights of the public and educate people about their fair housing rights. Fair housing education and enforcement play a pivotal role in increasing housing choice and minority homeownership and combating predatory lending.

I support \$55 million for HUD-VASH Program

HUD—VASH is the only program that supports the permanent housing and rehabilitation of homeless veterans. HUD-VASH is a joint HUD and VA initiative that provides specially designated Section 8 “Housing Choice” vouchers, case management, and supportive services to homeless veterans. Vouchers are used to assist with the payment of rent for veterans and their families. The goal of the program is to support veterans’ permanent housing in the community.

I support \$89 million for Housing Counseling Assistance.

We respectfully request \$89 million for the Housing Counseling Assistance Program in the Fiscal Year 2022. The Housing Counseling Assistance Program is a vitally important resource for current and prospective homeowners. This funding supports HUD-approved housing counseling agencies that provide unbiased information and education for consumers on foreclosure mitigation programs, rental assistance, pre-purchase counseling, reverse mortgages, and homelessness assistance.

I support \$165 million for Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Programs and Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control.

Over the past two decades, HUD's Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control Program has developed programs to address lead hazards in the home, successfully creating 165,000 lead-free units, ensuring that over 185,000 units are lead-safe, and upgrading 20,000 substandard housing units. Providing the Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control with \$165 million in FY 2022 is critical to continuing this progress.

I support \$410 million for Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS.

The requested funding for this important, effective and bipartisan program will provide relief to the HIV/AIDS community by providing much needed support to more 62,500 households in need of housing assistance.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would urge the Subcommittee to include the following report language concerning environmental justice and cancer clusters, like the ones that have been discovered in my congressional district:

1. ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

“The Committee is aware of public health research studies that have documented levels of cancer types at levels statistically significant greater levels than statewide averages in census tracts inhabited primarily by African Americans and low-income communities of color. These “cancer clusters” are a result of a history of Jim Crow, housing discrimination and unequal enforcement of environmental laws and land use. One instance was called a “textbook case of environmental racism,” where incinerators, private and public landfills and other waste facilities were disproportionately placed in African American neighborhoods on the east side of Houston. As a result, these communities bore the highest cost to their safety, health and property values even though a disproportionate share of the residents did not work at the plants.

“The Committee expects and directs all agency heads to redouble efforts to ensure that the costs and benefits of environmental protection are distributed equally across the board, and to assess the need for additional remedial action in areas that have been particularly affected by unfair environmental policies and enforcement.”

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, I thank you and the Ranking Member for your leadership and for extending me this opportunity to share my major priorities with the Subcommittee.