

# HOUSING FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS ACT OF 2014

## Senators Al Franken and Rob Portman

Too often, youth and veterans who have experienced homelessness must choose between stable housing and a full-time education. Because of a limitation in the eligibility criteria for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, homeless or previously homeless individuals who would otherwise qualify to live in low-income housing lose eligibility for LIHTC rental units if they choose to attend school full-time. **The Housing for Homeless Students Act of 2014 will ensure that individuals, including veterans, who have experienced homelessness have access to affordable housing while they pursue an education.**

### The problem

The Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program provides a reduction in tax liability for developers that build or rehabilitate affordable rental housing units. LIHTC has been used successfully to build properties intended to house individuals and families who experience homelessness. However, the current law does not allow tenants, including homeless and formerly homeless individuals, to be full-time students.

The intent of this “student rule” is to prohibit LIHTC funds from being used to construct dormitories and to prevent college students, who often have *temporarily* low incomes, from utilizing resources meant for individuals and families with more serious and longer-term housing needs. However, the student rule provides no exception for homeless and previously homeless youth or veterans. Because of this, students may lose access to LIHTC housing units if they go to school full-time. Alternatively, if they choose to attend school part-time in order to keep their LIHTC housing eligibility, these students may lose access to grants, loans, and scholarships that are limited to full-time students. **In effect, the current rule holds back truly low-income individuals trying to achieve an education.**

### Housing for Homeless Students Act of 2014

This legislation will exempt individuals from the student rule if they experienced homelessness at any point in the five years prior to moving into the LIHTC. This expanded eligibility will include homeless individuals covered by the definition of “homeless children and youth” in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The bill also includes veterans who have been homeless to ensure that they have access to affordable housing while seeking an education. **These changes to the student rule will allow full-time students who experience or have recently experienced homelessness to become eligible (or retain eligibility) for LIHTC housing units.**

# **HOUSING FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS ACT OF 2014**

## **National endorsements**

Affordable Housing Tax Credit Coalition  
Covenant House International  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Institute of Real Estate Management  
National Affordable Housing Management Association  
National Affordable Housing Trust  
National Alliance to End Homelessness  
National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth  
National Association of Consumer Advocates  
National Center for Housing and Child Welfare  
National Coalition for Homeless Veterans  
National Coalition for the Homeless  
National Fair Housing Alliance  
National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty  
National Leased Housing Association  
National Low Income Housing Coalition  
National Network for Youth  
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future  
The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights  
True Colors Fund

## **Minnesota endorsements**

Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis  
Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota  
Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers  
Minneapolis / Hennepin County Office to End Homelessness  
Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless  
Minnesota Council of Child Caring Agencies  
Minnesota Housing Partnership  
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities  
Minnesota State University Student Association  
Minnesota TRiO  
Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity