



Following a unanimous House vote earlier this year the Senate unanimously approved the “Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016” (H.R. 3700) on July 14. The bill provides the first comprehensive update to the nation’s low-income housing programs in 18 years and aims to improve federal rental assistance programs while retaining the core characteristics that make them effective. Some of the key characteristics of the bill are as follows:

- **Expanding low-income tenants’ access to areas with less crime and better schools.** The bill makes a variety of improvements to the project-based housing vouchers program. It gives agencies the flexibility to increase project-basing another 10% and allows PHAs to commit project-based vouchers for 20 years. These changes increase housing options while still ensuring choice.
- **Helping address homelessness.** Agencies now have the flexibility to use these project-based vouchers more effectively. This allows them to provide supportive housing to homeless individuals and families, as well as veterans, senior citizens, and people with disabilities. It also revises the rules for inspecting units that families with vouchers wish to rent in, enabling vulnerable families to get into homes more quickly and protecting them from eviction.
- **Strengthening work incentives and financial autonomy.** The bill encourages employment by delaying rent increases for any tenants who start a new job or whose earnings rise. Additionally, changes to the income review policy allow residents to hold on to 100% of increased earnings from income for a longer period of time.
- **Reducing administrative burdens for housing agencies and private owners of assisted units.** The bill allows for expedited inspection processes for units to be rented with vouchers and streamlines the rules for determining tenants’ rents, allowing both agencies and owners to target more resources on activities that directly benefit low-income households.
- **Helping preserve public housing and improve residents’ quality of life.** The bill gives agencies flexibility to use funds for pressing renovation needs and preventing low-income families from being exposed to deteriorating living conditions and safety hazards.

You can find more information on the legislation [here](#).