



September 22, 2021

The Honorable Mark Warner
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20010

Dear Senator Warner:

On behalf of the members of the National Bankers Association (NBA), I write to express our support for the Low-Income First Time Homebuyers (LIFT) Act. We believe the LIFT Act will allow families in the communities we serve to build wealth through homeownership and provide a secure financial baseline for future generations.

Since its founding in 1927, the National Bankers Association (NBA) has served as a voice for Black and other minority-owned banks (MDI Banks). Now, with membership that includes Hispanic-American, Asian-American, Native-American, and women-owned banks, our reach extends across the country. We believe strongly in advocating for not only our member banks, but also the communities they serve. Our members help low and moderate-income communities across the country, and they are committed to providing economic revitalization to families in those neighborhoods.

The LIFT Act could provide our banks with the opportunity to provide a transformational mortgage product that can have a generational impact. Unfortunately, many minority depository institutions have not been full participants in the FHA mortgage program. This has been due in large part to programmatic limitations that make it hard for these banks to qualify for FHA-approved lender status. Another limiting factor has been access to sufficient capital that would allow MDIs to make enough mortgage loans to meet the demand from their local communities. The latter barrier has been addressed in large part by the recently enacted Emergency Capital Investment Program (ECIP) you authored earlier this year. We look forward to working closely with you to ensure that MDI ECIP applications are ultimately approved.

With regards to the former, it is our desire to work with you and the Biden Administration to ensure that there is sufficient focus on guaranteeing that more MDIs are certified as FHA-approved lenders in the immediate future. Given our connection and access to the communities targeted for relief by the LIFT Act, we believe this will be necessary for successful implementation.

We have an opportunity to reverse decades of targeted economic redlining and allow communities to rebuild if the necessary steps are taken now to provide LMI communities the help they need. Providing MDIs with the opportunity to do the job they were created to perform is vital if our efforts are to ensure that every community in the country can take part in our nation's post COVID-19 economic recovery, thus benefiting the economy as a whole. We appreciate the opportunity to share our views with you and look forward to working with you to ensure the LIFT Act fulfills its very important purpose.

Sincerely,

Nicole A. Elam

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "N Elam".

President and CEO
National Bankers Association