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March 13, 2009

Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin
Washington Office
2446 Rayburn Building
Washington DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Baldwin:

In 2005, United Way of Dane County convened some of Madison's most influential leaders in real estate development, finance, government, business and the nonprofit sector to find a way to reverse the growing problem of homelessness among families with children. The result was a mobilization plan that promises to keep more vulnerable families in their homes and quickly get those who become homeless back into permanent housing. United Way of Dane County is investing more than \$1 million in initiatives identified in this mobilization plan, including eviction prevention, financial counseling, and housing case management.

The critical piece of the mobilization plan is to launch the *Housing First* program model in Dane County. *Housing First* is a program whereby families are moved out of a shelter within days of their arrival and placed in a long-term housing situation where they are provided with supportive services for up to two years to assure that they are stabilized and avoid repeated homelessness. United Way has already piloted the program with excellent results. The time is ripe to bring it to scale; resources beyond those of United Way of Dane County will be necessary to make that happen.

The Road Home, a nonprofit agency in Madison, has stepped forward to implement this model for our most vulnerable families with children, calling it *Housing and Hope*. They have launched a capital campaign that has generated tremendous community support. They need the extra boost of federal funds to reach their goals. What is particularly attractive about this investment opportunity is that are raising an endowment to support on-going services at the apartments, meaning that continued federal funding will not be necessary.

I strongly encourage you to sponsor an appropriation for the *Housing and Hope* initiative. You will be taking a leadership role in reducing homelessness among families with children.

Sincerely,



Leslie Ann Howard
President and CEO