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Lutheran Services in America Member Testifies in Support of National Affordable Housing Trust Fund

July 19, 2007 – Baltimore, MD – Rita, age 71, has an annual income of \$3,720. After a divorce, she raised her children without receiving any support. Then, she cared for and lived with her mother, combining their incomes to be able to afford the cost of housing. After her mother died, she did not know where she was going to live, since she couldn't afford the monthly payments on her own. Rita has \$253 in her checking account and \$773 in her savings account.

But Rita's story has a happy ending. Through Lutheran Homes Society, she found an apartment where she pays \$83 a month. Rita says, "I don't know where I would be if I had not moved here, I am able to remain independent."

This was one story that was included in David I. Roberts, President/CEO of Lutheran Homes Society, testimony, July 19 during a hearing of the House of Representatives Committee on Financial Services on the "National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act of 2007," bipartisan legislation to create a National Housing Trust Fund. (HR 2895)

Roberts, testifying on behalf of Lutheran Services in America, Lutheran Homes Society, and LSA-Ohio, said, "The passage of this bill would make a significant difference in the lives of those in need of affordable housing, particularly those who have low incomes as a result of a disability or loss of a spouse."

Lutheran Homes Society (LHS) operates group homes for troubled youth, assisted living, long-term care, and independent living for older persons, including 624 apartments for elderly residents at 11 sites. LSA-Ohio is a coalition of 17 social service organizations that are members of Lutheran Services in America.

In his testimony, Roberts noted that "nearly 95 million people (one-third of the nation) have significant housing needs, including high housing costs relative to income, overcrowding, inadequate living conditions, and homelessness. Nearly 65 million people that experience housing needs live in households with low incomes, earning less than 80 percent of the area's median income."

Lutheran Services in America (LSA) has identified creating and preserving affordable housing as one of the highest public policy priorities for this Congress. LSA member organizations currently offer over 16,000 affordable housing units and beds for low income people throughout the United States and the Caribbean.

Lutheran Services in America creates opportunities with people in thousands of communities throughout the United States and the Caribbean in partnership with national Lutheran church bodies and their nearly 300 health and human service organizations. Working neighbor to neighbor through services in health care, aging and disability supports, community development, housing, and child and family strengthening, these organizations together touch the lives of one in 50 Americans each year.