

## **Congress Declares September 2017 as NATIONAL MONTH FOR RENTERS**

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Washington, DC – With more than 25 million Americans, including nine million children, facing housing insecurity each year, Make Room Inc. today announced a bipartisan congressional effort designating September 2017 as “National Month for Renters” at a press conference and congressional briefing on Capitol Hill.

Joined at the press conference by resolution sponsors Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Reps. Bruce Poliquin (R-ME) and Denny Heck (D-WA), Make Room shed light on the eleven million households nationwide that spend more than half of their income just on rent, while making sacrifices such as forgoing food, healthcare, and other necessities.

“Make Room is extremely grateful to have bipartisan support for ‘National Month for Renters’ to shine a spotlight on the critical issue of struggling renters and affordable housing in America,” said Ali Solis, Make Room Inc., President and CEO. “Our goal is to spread awareness and humanize this issue, reinforce the importance of placing affordable rental housing on the national agenda, and advocate for bold solutions that will end housing insecurity.”

House resolution 475, cosponsored by Reps. Poliquin and Heck, was introduced in the House of Representatives on July 25, 2017. The Senate version is being introduced by Senators Bill Cassidy (R-LA) and Van Hollen this week.

“People need to be able to afford their rent and their house note,” said Dr. Cassidy. “Congress and the Trump Administration will work to put families into safe and affordable housing.”

“Millions of families in Maryland and across the country are being squeezed by rising rents - making it difficult to pay for other basic needs like groceries and health care,” said Senator Van Hollen. “I’m pleased to join Senator Cassidy in offering this bipartisan resolution. We want to bring awareness to this issue as we mark National Month for Renters in September, and to thank Make Room and the other groups working on a problem that impacts so many in our nation.”

“Tens of thousands of Maine families spend more than half of their income just to pay rent,” said Congressman Poliquin. “With an especially elderly population of renters in our state who are retired or close to retirement and without a regularly paying stream of income, it’s more important now than ever before for policies to be put in place to help those who rent and who are facing ever-increasing costs. I am very pleased to be joining a bipartisan group in both the House and the Senate to bring this issue to the forefront so we can work toward solutions for those who are facing steeper costs for renting their homes.”

“A huge element of the struggle of living paycheck to paycheck is keeping up with rent and utilities,” said Rep. Denny Heck (D-WA). “As affordable housing gets increasingly scarce in Washington State and across the country, too many families are on the brink of losing their rental housing to forces beyond their control. We need to build awareness before more families get pushed to the brink of an uncertain and insecure housing situation, and figure out ways to address the problems and challenges that renters face every month.”

Rising country music star Kane Brown, who recently partnered with Make Room on a national campaign, spoke at the press conference and participated in a Congressional briefing with families impacted by the current rental housing crisis.

“When I was younger, my mom and I lived in a car because we didn’t have anywhere to go. After graduating from high school, even though I was working, I didn’t have enough money to pay rent so I stayed with my Nana,” Kane Brown revealed. “I’m proud to partner with Make Room to help other people who have been in similar housing situations. I just want people to know that they can make it through hard times like I did.”

A key part of Make Room’s mission is telling the personal stories of America’s struggling renters, including through videos that appear on the [Make Room website](#). The following four Make Room families attended the press conference and participated in the Congressional briefing on September 12.

The Rollins Family (Detroit, Michigan) ([video story](#))

The Shuman Family (Baton Rouge, Louisiana) ([video story](#))

The Sigar Family (Madison, Tennessee) ([video story](#))

The Duarte Family (Los Angeles, California) ([video story](#))

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*Make Room, the nation’s leading organization working to address the rental housing crisis in America, gives voice to struggling renters and elevates rental housing on the agendas of our nation’s leaders. We advocate for better policies, tell the personal stories of these families, and connect them to our nation’s leaders through an [online digital platform](#). To date, nearly 155,000 messages (emails, tweets) have been sent through the digital platform to elected representatives across the country. Make Room is a valuable source of up-to-date information about the dimensions of the rental housing crisis.*

For more information about Make Room, Inc. please visit [www.makeroomusa.org](http://www.makeroomusa.org) or follow on Facebook/MakeRoomUSA, Twitter @MakeRoomUSA, and Instagram@MakeRoomUSA

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