

September 28, 2020

Dear Governor Lamont, Chief of Staff Mounds, and Chief Operating Officer Geballe:

The HOMEConnecticut campaign has been in place since 2004. Made up of more than 100 diverse stakeholders, including housing advocates, non-profit and business leaders, lenders, housing developers, and builders who care about ensuring every resident has a safe, stable place to call home. We write to ask that you extend the existing eviction moratorium and expand the rental assistance program.

We know you are well aware of the unprecedented health and economic challenges Connecticut faces during this pandemic. We want to call your attention to some of the critical housing problems faced by Connecticut's families as we live through COVID-19.

- 25% of Connecticut renters say they have slight or no confidence that they will be able to pay next month's rent.¹
- Many landlords continue to go unpaid during the eviction moratorium with 14% of Connecticut renters not current on rent.²
- Despite the eviction moratorium, 32% of Connecticut renters that are not current on their rent report it is very or somewhat likely they will be evicted from their home in the next two months.³
- Tenants with eviction filings made prior to the moratorium are being evicted even during this enduring pandemic. Tenants are encountering numerous problems with execution issuance hearings, including various problems with notification of hearings, and landlords challenging tenants' CDC eviction moratorium declarations.
- CT Fair Housing Center reports clients facing a variety of harassment and discrimination due to COVID-19, including: tenants hospitalized due to COVID-19 that fear being unable to return home when released from the hospital because they have been unable to pay the rent, tenants threatened with termination of their lease in response to the extended eviction moratorium, and tenants being harassed by landlords.

¹ Week 14 Household Pulse Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, September 14, 2020. https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/hhp/2020/wk14/housing2b_week14.xlsx

² Week 14 Household Pulse Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, September 14, 2020. https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/hhp/2020/wk14/housing1b_week14.xlsx

³ Week 14 Household Pulse Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, September 14, 2020. https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/hhp/2020/wk14/housing3b_week14.xlsx

We write to ask that you:

1. Extend the eviction moratorium through the end of 2020 to match the CDC moratorium;

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) federal eviction moratorium is in place for the remainder of 2020, but the process is onerous for renters and requires the cooperation and active participation of landlords, some of whom will not participate. We ask you to extend the state eviction moratorium through the end of 2020 to coincide with the CDC eviction moratorium that began on September 4.

2. Expand the Governor's moratorium to include a prohibition on marshals serving summary process executions without the CDC requirement of a declaration;

We ask that you expand the eviction moratorium to include the suspension of eviction executions. As of September 1, eviction cases filed prior to April 10, 2020 have continued through the courts. This is placing many families at risk of homelessness as the COVID-19 pandemic continues.

3. Expand funding of the state rent relief program for rent arrearage payments and for the administration of the program.

The Temporary Rental Housing Assistance Program (T-RHAP) launched in July needs additional administrative funding to improve the application processing time to get relief more quickly into the hands of tenants and their landlords. We ask you to authorize the additional funds necessary to administer the T-RHAP program at a level adequate to expeditiously process the backlog of some 7000+ applications.

Analysis in our April 15 letter to you estimated the additional cost to stably house renter families at the greatest risk of losing their housing as a result of the COVID-19 crisis at between \$400 million and one billion. We continue to recommend the expansion of a rental stabilization fund of not less than \$100 million to start, to provide relief to renters prior to the start of eviction proceedings and to stabilize landlords' operating budgets and the private rental market. We recognize that a rental assistance fund of this size will require resources beyond those available through state funding and will continue to advocate for passage of federal rent relief.

As the eviction moratorium necessarily continues, more landlords are struggling. When landlords lose steady rent payments, they risk not being able to maintain or improve their properties and of missing utility or property tax payments. We risk losing some of these

properties as affordable rental homes which will extend the impact of the pandemic on vulnerable individual and families' housing stability.

We believe that immediate attention to these issues is necessary to prevent more Connecticut residents from becoming unstably housed or homeless as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. We know that our Department of Housing and partners at the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority are working hard and we stand ready to continue to assist them in any way. We are available to further discuss any of these recommendations.

Sincerely,



Kiley Gosselin, Executive Director
Partnership for Strong Communities
Organizing entity of the HOMEConnecticut Campaign⁴

⁴ HOMEConnecticut works to address Connecticut's affordable housing shortage with the goal to **Ensure that all Connecticut residents have access to a range of affordable housing choices in all communities in the state.** The HOMEConnecticut Advisory Committee is a broad-based campaign comprised of the following individuals:

Fionnuala Darby-Hudgens, Connecticut Fair Housing Center
Erin Kemple, Connecticut Fair Housing Center
John Guskowski, Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association
Zach McKeown, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities
Donna Hamzy-Carroccia, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities
Timothy Hollister, Shipman & Goodwin LLP
Jim Horan, Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Melvyn Colon, Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance
Melissa Kaplan-Macey, Regional Plan Association
Hiram Peck, Planner for the Town of Avon
Jim Perras, Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Connecticut
Raphael Podolsky, Connecticut Legal Services
Rick Porth, United Way of Connecticut
Anika Singh Lemar, Ludwig Center for Community and Economic Development at Yale Law School
Susan Thomas, Melville Charitable Trust
Carla Weil, Capital for Change, Inc.
Christie Stewart, Fairfield County Center for Housing Opportunity
Gregory Ugalde, T&M Building Co., Inc.



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For Our Economy, Our Families, Our Future
a campaign of the Partnership for Strong Communities

Cc:

Commissioner Mosquera-Bruno; Commissioner Gifford; Senator Anwar; Representative McGee; Senator Cassano; Representative McCarthy Vahey; Senator Looney; Senator Duff; Senator Fasano; Senator Witkos; Representative Aresimowicz; Representative Ritter; Representative Klarides; Representative Candelora

227 LAWRENCE STREET ■ HARTFORD, CT 06106
TEL: 860.244.0066 ■ FAX: 860.247.4320
WWW.PSCHOUSING.ORG

