

Dear: Andreas D Addison

I am writing to you from the comfort and safety of my home, a small word, yet one that means so much in these recent times when home is not just the best place, but the only place to be during the covid-19 pandemic. Home is where we can feel secure from the uncertainty of the world around us; it is where we rest and prepare for the next day; it is where we celebrate and laugh and plan for the future. It is where we have a place for our possessions, where we establish bonds with our neighbors and family, where we know we belong.

But many Richmonders do not have secure housing and cannot take refuge from the uncertainty that is their daily life. They cannot rest and prepare for the next day when they are surrounded by threats to their safety and worry about how to pay bills and care for their family. They can't plan for the future when they don't know how they will pay the rent. With no permanent residence, possessions are limited to what you can carry from place to place. There's little bonding with neighbors when a revolving door of evictions brings someone new every month. It's hard to feel like you belong when you don't know where you will be living. Without the security of affordable housing there's not much energy for engaging in community activities or service, helping children succeed in school, enjoying leisure and recreation. Affordable housing is essential to basic survival.

Since 2018 Richmond has been a focus on the national stage as the city with the second highest eviction rate in the entire country. Since then, the City has taken steps to support eviction prevention, but these efforts must be stepped up at this time.

Currently, City Council 2021 FY budget has allocated \$2.9M for the Housing Trust Fund and \$485 thousand for the Eviction Diversion Fund. **As your constituent and a member of the local chapter of Virginia Organizing, I am asking you to fully support that funding and in addition to support the proposal by RISC that an additional \$800 thousand be allocated when available, \$600 thousand to the Housing Trust Fund and \$200 thousand to the Eviction Diversion Fund.** Doesn't everyone deserve the security of an affordable place to call home?

Thank you for helping provide the security of affordable housing for our fellow Richmonders.

Sincerely,

Bernabe Simon, member of the Richmond Chapter of Virginia Organizing 10706 Bluebell Dr Glen Allen va 23060