



Long Island Housing Services, Inc.

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March 5, 2018

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Senator John Flanagan
Senate Majority Leader
260 Middle Country Road
Suite 102
Smithtown, NY 11787

Re: Home Stability Support (HSS) program

Dear Senator Flanagan:

I am writing in support of the Home Stability Support (HSS) program, which I believe, will help to reduce homelessness in New York State while saving the State millions of dollars spent housing the homeless.

I am alarmed at the number of homeless Long Islanders and New Yorkers as well as the human and financial costs of homelessness to our communities. It costs \$100 a day to shelter each of the approximately 500 homeless families in Suffolk County alone. Half of these families have a source of income, including employment. Many are homeless because they cannot find affordable rental housing or due to evictions from their homes. A serious problem in sheltering our homeless neighbors is the fact that the State public-assistance allowance falls far short of the actual cost of renting on Long Island. The HUD Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a modest one-bedroom apartment on Long Island is \$1,527, far in excess of the public assistance shelter allowance for a family of two or three which, depending on the county, is about \$400 a month.

I therefore call on you to initiate a new program to stem the tide of displacement that is driving large numbers of poor families and individuals into homelessness each day. Specifically, we urge you to adopt and adequately fund the **Home Stability Support (HSS)** program in this year's State Budget. HSS will be a new statewide, State and Federally-funded rent supplement program to bridge the difference between the public assistance shelter allowances and 85 percent of the applicable FMR; it would also address the high costs of heating borne by families. HSS is designed to assist:

- Each family or individual facing a loss of housing due to formal or informal eviction, domestic violence, or hazardous conditions;
- Those who are already homeless and living doubled-up, in shelters, or outside in places not meant for human habitation.



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and promotion of decent and affordable housing through advocacy and education.*

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We request that the Senate allocate \$40 million as the initial down payment for HHS.

We believe that this investment will reduce the more than \$1 billion currently spent to shelter homeless New Yorkers each year. This is by far the most cost-effective solution for preventing homelessness and ultimately keeping hundreds of thousands of people in their homes.

The problem of homelessness has reached a critical juncture, and the costs to our communities are unsustainable. It is time to boldly and adequately attack the preventable causes of this record homelessness. HSS is a viable and cost-effective response to the homeless crisis facing our State, and for that reason I strongly urge you to include HSS in the 2018-2019 State Budget.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Ian Wilder, Esq.

Executive Director

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