

May 16, 2018

Dear Governor Cuomo,

We are begging, pleading, and crying out for decisive action to address our housing and homeless crisis in our community and in our State. We are crying out for action that will prevent mass evictions that create homelessness. We are crying out for deeply affordable housing as a pipeline out of homelessness. In Rochester, NY rents are rising faster than incomes and homeless placements went up 21% from 2016 to 2017. For those of us that are homeless in Rochester, our lives are on average 24 years shorter. Political inaction around the housing crisis is killing us. But we're taking a stand for our lives and the lives of our sisters and brothers that are homeless and facing homelessness. And we are asking you to stand with us.

In December 2017 we asked to meet with you and invited you to our Town Hall on Housing Justice at St. Mary's Church. A designee from Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) of New York State came but wouldn't say whether you supported expanding tenant protections that reduce homelessness. We followed up with your representative at the Governor's office in Rochester, NY. We had a very cordial meeting with your representative and were excited to partner with the Governor's office to implement the necessary reforms including Good Cause Eviction Protections (which ends no-fault evictions) and expanding the ability for cities and towns to opt-in to rent stabilization throughout the whole state (not just for downstate New York). However, when we followed up with your representative regarding your support for the reforms we heard NO RESPONSE. When we followed up a second time we heard NO RESPONSE. We delivered a petition with 6,700 signatures in support of expanding tenant protections but we heard NO RESPONSE. We highlighted our stories and the need for these tenant protections in the local media and the New York Times and we heard from your offices NO RESPONSE.

The crisis and evictions at the Hotel Cadillac could have been prevented if you supported and enacted these reforms. We are asking you to lead. We are asking you to stand with us and support tenants and end homelessness in New York State.

Sincerely,

Don Adams
Homeless Union of Rochester

Tyrone Hodge
Homeless Union of Rochester

Kawanais Smith
City-Wide Tenant Union of Rochester

John Lindsey

City-Wide Tenant Union of Rochester

Sister Grace Miller
House of Mercy

The Rev. Peter W. Peters, Ph.D.
Co-chair of REACH
(Rochesterians Engaged in Action for the Chronically Homeless)

Annie Horas
St. Joseph's House of Hospitality

Pat Dupont
St. Joseph's House of Hospitality