

Dear Governor Holcomb:

Indiana is experiencing a crisis because of its shortage of safe, healthy, and affordable homes accessible to the most vulnerable Hoosiers and their communities. Despite laudable steps taken by your administration and other state policymakers to address pieces of the crisis, there remains a need for coordination among Indiana government branches, agencies, and stakeholders to resolve the dangers caused by this shortage and the difficulties of enforcing health and safety standards. The undersigned Hoosier organizations and individuals respectfully ask you to use your powers as Governor to immediately create and convene a Commission on Housing Safety, Stability, and Affordability to further investigate and address these issues.

Safe and stable housing is fundamental to the physical and mental health of all Hoosiers, to the education and development of children, to the employability of adults, and to a thriving state economy. We acknowledge and appreciate the steps your administration has already taken to increase Indiana's overall housing supply, including the creation and funding of the Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI), of which roughly one third of requests have been for affordable and workforce housing. We also acknowledge and appreciate steps your administration has taken to keep Hoosiers stably housed and their housing providers solvent during times of public health and economic upheaval, including through the creation of Indiana's first statewide Emergency Rental Assistance and housing stability services program. These actions have had an incredible, positive impact.

However, despite these important and necessary steps that your administration and other state policymakers have taken, Indiana continues to experience a housing safety, stability, and affordability crisis.

Indiana currently has only 34 affordable and available rental homes for every 100 extremely low-income Hoosier households, the second-lowest rate in the Midwest. 76 percent of those households are severely burdened with housing costs, meaning they spend more than half of their income on housing expenses, the single highest rate in the Midwest. Over the past decade, housing costs have risen, homeownership has decreased, and disparities have grown, especially for seniors, Black and brown Hoosiers, and working but low-income families.

Because of this shortage and rising costs, too many of the most vulnerable Hoosiers are thrown into housing instability. They must make do with inadequate housing that they cannot afford, subjecting themselves and their children to the risk of eviction and homelessness. At the time this letter was written, more than 72,000 Hoosier households have had an eviction filed against them in the past year alone. An estimated 86,000 households remain at risk of eviction, with 98,000 children in those households. Data further proves that this is not a lingering outcome of the COVID-19 crisis but rather the state of our housing shortage and subsequent instability.

Housing instability and evictions in Indiana have been shown to cause long-term damage to health for families and children, including

through increased exposure to lead poisoning, infectious disease, and negative respiratory effects due to having nowhere else to go but to subpar housing. The American Academy of Pediatrics specifically finds that housing instability and homelessness negatively impact child health and development, leading to higher rates of acute and chronic health problems, accidents, injuries, increased risk of abuse, exposure to violence, psychological trauma, higher rates of emotional distress, developmental delays, and decreased academic achievement.

Indiana's patchwork of codes for health and safety standards related to rental housing is one unaddressed problem that both contributes to and increases the danger of the state's lack of housing supply. This variance of codes contributes to difficulties in enforcing them. There are widely diverging methods and standards for enforcement of local and state codes between Indiana's 92 counties and additional cities, with many reporting apparent confusion and roadblocks when it comes to implementation at the local level. This is what allows for subpar housing to exist, which desperate families often fall into.

The failure to adequately enforce state and local housing codes jeopardizes the health and even lives of Hoosiers. In January of 2024, six children died in a deadly fire in a South Bend rental home that was reported to have failed a safety code inspection for dangerous wiring but was nonetheless allowed to be rented again before proper repairs were confirmed to have been made.

We believe that Indiana would benefit from a comprehensive review and evaluation of its existing systems of code standards and enforcement to inform public policy and safeguard the health and safety of Hoosiers. Doing so would improve the quality of available affordable housing and protect households of limited financial means. We also believe that Indiana would benefit from increased collaboration among Indiana government branches, agencies, and stakeholders to take additional steps to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Appointing and convening a Commission on Housing Safety, Stability, and Affordability would address the state's unresolved housing issues and promote solutions in several concrete ways:

- Bring together representatives of state administrative agencies, courts, local governments, and legislators, along with stakeholders and residents who are tackling the housing health and safety crisis on the ground, so they can work together instead of in silos;
- Align existing housing resources and initiatives at the state and local levels, potentially saving taxpayers millions of dollars;
- Clarify the jurisdiction of code enforcement regarding housing health and safety;
- Coordinate administrative and court-based rules that can protect Hoosiers and expand the housing supply for communities with the greatest need for healthy housing without the need for legislation; and
- Provide a united voice to recommend new legislation where necessary.

We urge you to appoint and convene a Commission on Housing Safety, Stability, and Affordability, which will serve as a legacy of your administration's efforts to elevate the public health, safety, and economic well-being of Hoosiers, their communities, and Indiana.

Signed:

A Safe House Corporation

AARP Indiana

Beautifully Human

Building A Thriving Compassionate Community

Catholic Charities Fort Wayne South Bend

Christian Ministries

Cinnaire

Citizens Action Coaliton

City of South Bend

Civil Rights Department City of Anderson

Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention (CHIP)

Coburn Place

Concerned Clergy of Indianapolis

Disability Revolution, Inc.

DLBE

Dream Center Evansville

Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana

Fairfield Township

Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis

Fay Biccard Glick Neighborhood Center at Crooked Center

Food Finders Food Bank
Foster Success
Greater Indianapolis Multifaith Alliance (GIMA)
Habitat for Humanity of Evansville
Habitat for Humanity of Northwest Indiana
Hammond Human Relations Commission
HAND Inc.
Hanna Community Center
Herron-Morton Neighborhood Association
Historic Urban Neighborhoods of Indianapolis (HUNI)
HomesteadCS
Hoosier Action
Indiana Catholic Conference
Indiana Tenants Association
Indianapolis Urban League
Indy Hunger Network
InFocus Property Solutions
John Boner Neighborhood Centers
Jones, Jones, & Johnson
Justways Research
Kimberly's Business by Design, LLC
Lafayette Transitional Housing Center
LARA Educational Opportunities
Lay Clergy Team supporting the Martin Luther King Community Center
LISC Indianapolis
Love In Action Transitional Housing
Memorial CDC

Mental Health America of West Central Indiana, Inc.
Meridian Street United Methodist Church
Monroe County National Organization for Women (MC NOW)
Mother Hubbard's Cupboard
National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc-Tau Chapter
Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc.
Our Lady of the Road, Inc.
Ozanam Family Shelter
Prosperity Indiana
Rauch, Inc.
Recruiting Experiences LLC
Seeking 1610
Silky Sources Salon
St. Luke's UMC Tenant Advocacy Group
StartUP Gary Community Development Corporation
Stone City Alliance for Recovery and Hope
The Center for the Homeless in South Bend
The Garden Community Church
The Ross Foundation
Thrive Alliance
Tippecanoe Senior Services
Turnstone
United Way of Greater Lafayette
United Methodist Churches of Indiana
United Way of Central Indiana
United Way of Southwestern Indiana
YWCA Greater Lafayette

Jeff Abrams
Erin Adams
Mary Adkins
Aggie Adkins
Joseph Alamillo
Tracy Aldrich
Anna Aleman
Clinton Alexander
Austin Alles
Melissa Amburgey
Aliya Amin
Ian Andrews
Andy Arenson
Kylea Asher
Natalie Auberry
Linda Bailey
Tabitha Barbour
Caroline Barnes
Richard Baron
Ebony Barrett
Emily Bastine
David Bathe
Teresa Beam
Pamela Bean
Jenna Bednarski
Leintz Belony
DeBorah Benson

Reverend Evan Bever

Jasmine Black

Marcia Black

Sana Booker

LaNette Boone

Marlena Boswell

Andrew Bradley

Selma Branch

Elizabeth Brandt

Mandy Bray

Douglas Bridges

Nicole Brincefield

Adrian Brooks

Paula Brooks

Jamie Brown

Emily Browning

Tabitha Bryson

Steven Bulloff

Nekoma Burcham

Barbara Burke

Andrea Burnett

Deanna Burns

Kaleb Byers

Emilie Caldwell

Rei Christian Calma

Melinda Caron

Monica Casanova

Grace Caswell
Donna Catalano
Lisa Cauldwell
John Chambers
Lori Chambers
Marcy Chapman
Jill Chasen
Jordana Chernow
Brandi Christiansen
Amber Clarke
Kelly Clemens
Kristin Clements-Effner
Lainna Cohen
Madeline Compton
David Cook
Stephanie Cook
Tracy Cozatt
Dolly Craft
Beth Crum
Alexandra Curtis
Dick D'Alton
Michelle Daniel
Leslie Daugherty
Byron Daugherty
Lisa Davidson
Andrea Davis
Devin De Both

Corey Dea
Patrick DeBonis
Patricia Deering
Shelly DeLong
Betty Demichieli
Noah DeMoss
Jodi Denton
Latoya Dickerson
Carly Dixon
Tamie Dixon Tatum
Judie Doehrman
Elizabeth Donaldson
Latasha Dorsey
Maria Douglas
Sandy Dunfee
Jenny Durica
ruth elliott
Lisa Enright
Olivia Ensminger
Judith Essex
Amanda Estes
Kelly Evans
Nathan Ferreira
Jennifer Feutz
Tamesha Fikes
Taylor Firestine
Takarta Flagg

Linda Floyd
Tara Folks
Erika Fotsch
Judith Fox
Pamela Francis
Bruce Frankel
Mary Jane Frazier
Johannah Frey
Matt Fultz
Dorothy Galbreath
Aaron Gallagher
Rachel Gallagher
Doritha Garrett
Evelyn Gearries
Rick Ginther
Jazmin Glasco
Tami Golden
Gina Gomez
David Gotthelf
Melissa Graham
Jonathan Graves
Myrna Gray
Camille Green
Ben Greenfield
Rachel Greenfield
Ronald Greiner
Midge Greising

John Grimm
Janet Gross
Stephanie Guagliardo
Kate Guerrero
Alexandra Hall
Sidney Hardgrave
Beth Harlin
Inga Harrington
Tanika Harris
Susan Harris
Tiara Harris
Dana Harrison
Lilian Hart
Victoria Hathaway
Joan Haugh Beatty
Amelia Hawbaker
Olivia Hawbaker
Christopher Hegarty
Jane Hellmann-Otto
Lillian Herbers-Kelly
Karen Herbst-Kim
Bryan Hernandez
Connie Herndon
Matt Hester
Carl Hetler
Linda Hewitt
Robert Hewitt

Damon Hicks
Lia Hicks
April Hicks
Mikayla Higgins
Michelle Higgs
Patty Hines
Susan Holewinski
Drednisha Hollis
Danita Hoskin
Don Hossler
Krista Howard
Ethan Hrobsky
Jennifer Huff
Penelope Hughes
William Hurd
Carol Jackson
Barbara Jung
Brenda Kallner
Genene Kambs
Sandi Keller
Brice Kelly
Haneefah Khaaliq
Brittany Kiel
Julie Kilger
Gloria King
Rachel King
Carolyn Kingen

Susan Klein
Joyce Kleinman
Brian Kocher
Mary Kohen
Kate Kollman
David Kovich
Jeff Krajewski
Larry Krauser
Brett Krichiver
Marilyn Kuhn
Janet Landato
Andrew Lane
Norma Lawson
Erin Leake
Christina Lear
Sierra Lee
Terri Lee
Barry Levitt
Destinee Lewis
Jerilyn Lewis
Brandon Lien
Kristin Liggin
Sue Lindborg
Mark Lindenlaub
Erin Long
Scott Lowe
Rus Lyons

Victoria Malichi
Jessica Malone
Joel Manship
Aviva Marer
Katie Marlowe
Stephanie Marshall
Elaine Martin
Sherlynn Martin
Michael Martinelli
Tony Mason
Tricia Massa
Jim Matthies
Nathan McBurnett
Kristina McCallister
Deborah McCarty
Ryan McClellan
Rebecca McCracken
Yanna McGraw
Tayisha McGuire
Graham McKeen
Jenna Means
Eileen Mejia
Steph Mellinger
Maria Claudia Mendez-Perkins
Scott Mercaeant-Koohns
Perry Metz
Ruth Metzger

Dawn Michaels
Lindsey Mickler
Michael Miller
Monica Miller
Sheena Miller
Zachary Miller
Heather Miller
Desiree Miller
Jennifer Million
Deborah Mitchell
Karsyn Mohler
Nancy Moldenhauer
Lauren Mondello
James Monger
Carolina Mora
Arryn Morris
JoAnn Morris
Jim Morris
Marie Morse
Ted Mosey
James Mosley
Abigael Mullens
William Muller
Cheryl Munson
Tammy Munson
Lauren Murfree
Emily Murray

Kai Mwaafrika
Tamara Nance
Amy Nelson
Melissa Nelson
Lunden Nunn-King
Rachel Obryant
Elizabeth Odle
Amber OHaver
Kim Olson
Mary K. Oreovicz
Bailey Ortiz
Sonja Overhiser
Larisa Parrish
Whisper Path
Liza Pavelich
Erica Penna
Rachael Peters
Susan Peters
Janet Pfadt
Evelyn Pierce-Hicks
Nia Posey
Mary Powell
Sarah Price
Alyssa Prince
Caprice Prince-Smith
Cathy Pullings
Lisa Ranck

Heidi Rauch
Raye Rauckman
Jeb Reece
Danielle Reese
Joel Reichenbach
Heather Reid
Colleen Renie
Kenda Resler Friend
Jaime Reynolds
Meredith Richmond
Douglas Robbins
Anna Roberts
Jill Robisch
Brady Rodriguez
Anita Rodriguez
Sheila Rosenthal
Priscilla Russell
Jennifer Rutkowski-Smith
Crystal Sanders
Kelly Sanford
Barbara Schilling
David Schnur
MaryAnn Schubeert
Bailey Schulz
Elizabeth Schunn
Aubrey Seader
Julia Shapiro

Randi Shapiro
Clinton Sharp
Danielle Sharp
Monica Sharp
Tara Shoffner
Robert Short
Steph Silva
Eric Simons
Janice Sinn
Andrew Smith
Catherine Smith
Stephen Smith
Whitney Smith
Karen Snyder
Dalene Soladine
Mary Sopata
Kirkston Spann
Saraj Spearman
Pauline Spiegel
Kathy St. Clair
Evelyn Steele
Nathaniel Steeves
Arthur Stein
Dodie M. Stein
Susan Stephon
Courtney Stewart
Brittany Still

Michelle Stohler
Erin Stojic
Tara Streb
Kelsie Stringham-Marquis
Wilbur Sutton
Roxie Sweikar
Theresa J. Switt
Bethany Tam
Karenn Tankersley
Mary Tarallo
Tamie Tatum
Annie Taylor
Linda Taylor
Brandon Taylor
Tammy Themel
Kellie Thomas
Phyllis Tobias
Churie Townsend Vester
Muriel Treadwell
Julie Vandever
Eileen Vandroff
Jean VanLeeuwen
Julie Vann
Margaret VanSchaik
Melanie Vehslage
Jody Veldkamp
Lani Vivirito

Lauren Wack
Cassie Wade
Levi Wagner
Tamara Walker
Heather Wallace
Eileen Walthall
Lucas Waterfill
Nate Waterfill
Dale Webster
Lew Weiss
Deborah White
Meisha Wide
Heather Wilberg
Cynthia Williams
Donna Wilson
Scotty Wilson
Ellie Wojtowicz
Kayla Wright
Colleen Wynn
Skyler York
Erika Young
Janaule Young
Carolyn Zhiss
Ronald Zhiss
Megan Zurawicz
Enid Zwirn
Leslie Zwirn