



THE FLORIDA SENATE
THE FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



Office of Governor Ron DeSantis
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399

December 16, 2021

Dear Governor DeSantis,

As you are certainly aware, many residents throughout our state are being denied the freedom to be healthy, prosperous, and safe due to an ongoing affordable housing crisis. According to the latest [data](#) from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, four of the bottom ten largest metro areas in the country for wages are in Florida, with the Orlando metro area ranking dead last.

As the \$15 minimum wage amendment passed in Florida last year comes into effect, many Floridians are struggling to keep up with the soaring cost of housing due to years of lagging wage growth that forced voters to take action. In Central Florida, [rents have increased by 20% since January](#), in South Florida rents have risen by an average of [14% across the board](#), and the Tampa Bay region has seen a [staggering 24.8% increase in rental prices since July](#), the largest increase in the nation. According to [data](#) compiled by Apartment List, only 2% of apartments in Tampa cost less than \$1,000 a month.

Additionally, Florida has been extremely slow in [getting rental assistance](#) out to those in need, significantly trailing other large states. This inaction has put many people who could be helped on the brink of eviction.

In a state which has [swept more than \\$2.3 billion](#) from our affordable housing trust fund since 2001, this has led to an unsustainable situation for too many working Floridians. In fact, the National Low Income Housing Coalition's [The Gap report](#) shows that 40% of middle-income households in Florida are cost-burdened when it comes to housing, with that number rising to 89% of extremely low income households, meaning they are paying more than 30% of their income each month in rent.

This situation is no longer sustainable as Floridians simply cannot afford Florida.

We are calling on you to use your authority as Governor to declare a state of emergency in Florida for housing affordability. As the state's chief executive, and as has been demonstrated many times throughout

the pandemic, the Florida Constitution gives your office wide latitude to protect our state in times of crisis. This moment surely meets that definition.

While under a declared state of emergency, [Florida statute 501.160](#) applies price gouging protections to rental prices of a “dwelling unit” retroactive to 30 days prior to the declaration. That is why in order for Floridians to gain relief during this state of emergency, we are asking you to use your powers to meet this extraordinary crisis by:

- Waiving the 30 day cap and extending it to the past 12 months, and;
- Directing the Attorney General to recognize any rental prices increases of greater than 10% as price gouging.

As the Florida Housing Coalition currently estimates that our state faces a deficit of [344,000 affordable housing units](#), we ask that you continue this state of emergency until the housing needs of all Floridians have been met.

During this holiday season, and after the incredible hardships that the pandemic has brought on so many Florida families, we believe that no child should worry that they and their parents will be evicted due to predatory rental prices increases. Those hard working Floridians who have been on the frontlines throughout the pandemic who you have highlighted many times deserve to know they will have a roof over their heads after the exemplary service they have provided to our state.

We look forward to your swift action on this matter, and your commitment to work with us during the 2022 legislative session to solve this crisis and guarantee freedom to all Floridians. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 850-717-5049.

In equality,



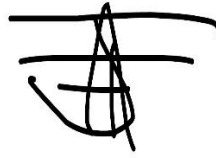
Senator Gary M. Farmer, Jr.
Florida Senate, District 34



Representative Carlos Guillermo Smith
Florida House of Representatives, District 49



Senator Lori Berman
Florida Senate, District 31



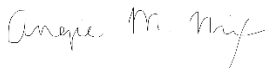
Senator Annette Taddeo
Florida Senate, District 40



Senator Victor M. Torres, Jr.
Florida Senate, District 15



Representative Anna V. Eskamani
Florida House of Representatives, District 47



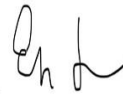
Representative Angie Nixon
Florida House of Representatives, District 14



Representative Nicholas X. Duran
Florida House of Representatives, District 112



Representative Kristen Arrington
Florida House of Representatives, District 43



Representative Emily Slosberg
Florida House of Representatives, District 91



Representative Yvonne Hayes Hinson
Florida House of Representatives, District 20



Representative Geraldine Thompson
Florida House of Representatives, District 44



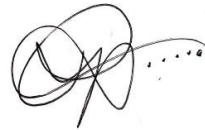
Representative Fentrice Driskell
Florida House of Representatives, District 63



Representative Evan Jenne
Florida House of Representatives, District 99



Representative Joseph Geller
Florida House of Representatives, District 100



Representative Patricia Williams
Florida House of Representatives, District 92



Representative Ben Diamond
Florida House of Representatives, District 68



Representative Ramon Alexander
Florida House of Representatives, District 8



Representative Marie Paule Woodson
Florida House of Representatives, District 101



Representative Joy Goff-Marcil
Florida House of Representatives, District 30



Representative Bobby DuBose
Florida House of Representatives, District 94



Representative Michele K. Rayner
Florida House of Representatives, District 70



Representative Tracie Davis
Florida House of Representatives, District 13



Representative Dianne Hart
Florida House of Representatives, District 61