

July 27, 2017

Dear Members of the New Jersey Assembly,

After 16 years of Trenton gridlock, towns are now making significant progress in addressing New Jersey's severe housing affordability crisis that threatens to price out working families, young families, people with disabilities and seniors living on fixed incomes. More than 120 towns throughout our state have worked with civil rights leaders and local non-profit developers to reach settlement agreements that will create tens of thousands of homes. These agreements represent compromises on all sides and are getting shovels in the ground now to build new homes affordable to New Jersey families.

New Jersey is one of the most racially segregated states in the country. The progress we are making is removing restrictive zoning policies that exclude African-American, Latino and other families of color from many New Jersey communities. Housing advocates and locally based nonprofit developers and municipal leaders are creating homes for working families and seniors, and are expanding supportive housing options so that New Jerseyans with physical and intellectual disabilities can receive the services they need while living close to their families and friends. These agreements are helping to create the homes New Jerseyans and our economy need to thrive in the future.

Unfortunately, a few members of the Legislature are peddling false information and demanding that the Legislature consider a dangerous bill designed to gut New Jersey's fair housing laws and hurt working families, seniors and people with disabilities. The Legislature has already rejected an earlier attempt by Assemblywoman Schepisi to push her proposal through in the 11th hour. We oppose Minority Leader Bramnick's effort to move A4666 on Monday, July 31, and urge members of the Assembly to reject it as well.

For the last eight years, the Legislature has demonstrated leadership and ideas to address the state's housing crisis. In addition to sending Governor Christie a bill that simplified the regulatory process for municipalities to meet their housing needs, the Legislature has adopted proposals to turn foreclosed homes into affordable ones multiple times. Governor Christie vetoed them all.

We are confident that the Legislature will reject this shortsighted and dangerous stunt to stop the progress that communities are making around the state. We must continue to enforce our fair housing and civil rights laws to build a state where working families, people of color, seniors and people with disabilities are welcome and included, and can thrive.

Sincerely,

Staci Berger,
President and Chief Executive Officer
Housing & Community Development Network of NJ

Christopher Estevez,
President
Latino Action Network

Michael McNeil,
Chair
New Jersey NAACP Statewide Housing Committee
Director
Solutions to End Poverty Soon

Diane Riley,
Executive Director
Supportive Housing Associate of New Jersey

Kevin Walsh,
Executive Director
Fair Share Housing Center