Faith Leaders for the Campaign 4 NY/NY Housing

January, 2016

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo Governor of the State of New York NYS Capitol Building Albany, NY 12224

Honorable Bill de Blasio Mayor of the City of New York City Hall New York, NY 10007

Dear Governor Cuomo and Mayor de Blasio:

As Faith Leaders from many faith traditions, from throughout New York City and State, we write to you to express our support for strengthening and extending the supportive housing plan known as New York/New York and join the Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing and more than 200 state and local organizations to call for a new City-State supportive housing initiative — the Campaign 4 New York/New York Housing — calling on Governor Cuomo to provide, in partnership with Mayor de Blasio and New York City and with other localities, 35,000 new units of supportive housing statewide for the most vulnerable New Yorkers. As you are both aware, we are at a crossroads in dealing with our large homeless populations. Permanent supportive housing is needed in particular for individuals and families with serious social service needs who face an uphill battle to find and maintain permanent, affordable housing and get off the streets.

At the very heart of each of our faith traditions is the call to stand with the most vulnerable members of our human family. In fact the very first special needs supportive housing program in New York was the St. Francis Friends of the Poor – for mentally disabled adults - established in 1980. Many members of our homeless population are our most vulnerable New Yorkers, including and especially those living with crippling mental illness. With 60,000 people in New York City homeless today, and 80,000 statewide – and given that only one out of six of the 20,000 approved applicants for supportive housing annually actually receive a housing placement due to the severe lack of available units, it is imperative that we all work together to establish a new City/State supportive housing agreement that fully funds the creation of 35,000 supportive housing units throughout New York State.

A strong permanent supportive housing agreement will send a powerful signal to members of our congregations and the general public, advocates and stakeholders and the entire country that New York is serious in its determination to end homelessness — and will help to affirm the public's faith that Government is committed to help all citizens to live full and decent lives. New Yorkers look to both of you for your continued strong leadership on this issue.

We look forward to hearing from each of you as to what your administration will do with regard to this most important of issues.

In Faith,

Father John Felice, Founder/Co-Director, St. Francis Friends of the Poor, Manhattan

Father John McVean, Founder/ Co-Director, St. Francis Friends of the Poor, Manhattan

Father Tom Walters, Founder/ Co-Director, St. Francis Friends of the Poor, Manhattan

Bishop Howard Hubbard, Bishop Emeritus, Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany

Bishop Robert Alan Rimbo, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Metropolitan New York Synod

Bishop Lawrence Provenzano, Episcopal Diocese of Long Island

Rabbi Joseph Potasnik, Executive V.P., NY Board of Rabbis

Bishop Jane Allen Middleton, New York Annual Conference United Methodist Church

Bishop James O. Stallings, American Baptist Churches of Metropolitan New York

Reverend Robert Foltz-Morrison, Executive Presbyter, Presbytery of New York City

Reverend Michael S. Bos, Senior Minister, West End Collegiate Church, President, Collegiate Church of New York

Reverend Krystin Granberg, Moderator, Presbytery of New York City

Reverend Peter Cook, Executive Director, New York State Council of Churches, Albany

Morris Gurley, President, New York City Council of Churches

Reverend Skip L'Heureux, Executive Director, Queens Federation of Churches

Reverend Thomas Goodhue, Executive Director, Long Island Council of Churches, Hempstead

Reverend Dr. William Lupfer, Rector, Trinity Wall Street

Reverend Dr. Serene Jones, President, Union Theological Seminary, Manhattan

Reverend Fred Davie, Exec. VP, Union Theological Seminary, Manhattan

Reverend Dr. James A. Forbes, National Minister, Drum Major Institute

Reverend Dr. Donald W. Shriver, Jr., President Emeritus, Union Theological Seminary, Manhattan

Peggy L. Shriver, Former Executive, National Council of Churches

Dr. Anne Klaeysen, Leader, New York Society for Ethical Culture

Reverend Chloe Breyer, Director, Interfaith Center of New York, Manhattan

Reverend John H. Vaughn, Executive Vice President, Auburn Seminary, Manhattan

Reverend James Parks Morton, Dean Emeritus, Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, Director Emeritus, Interfaith Center of New York

Dr. Uma Mysoreka, President, The Hindu Temple Society of North America, Flushing, NY

Reverend Dr. Raymond Rivera, President, Latino Pastoral Action Center, Bronx

Onleilove Alston, Executive Director, Faith in New York

Reverend Que English, Chair, NYC Clergy Round table, Senior Pastor, Bronx Christian Fellowship

Laura Jervis, Parish Assoc., Rutgers Presbyterian Church & ED, (Retired) West Side Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing, Inc.

Reverend Terry Troia, Director, Project Hospitality, Staten Island

David Schilling, Senior Program Director, Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility

Kevin E. Calderwood, President, NY NY South Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Dhanpaul Narine, President, Shri Trimurti Bhavan Hindu Temple, Queens

Imam Souleimane Konate, Secretary, Harlem Islamic Leadership, Inc. / Masjid Aqsa, Manhattan

Imam Mouhamed M. Sakho At-Tijani, President, Islamic Cultural Foundation of America (ICFA)

Imam Shamsi Ali, Spiritual Leader, Jamaica Muslim Center

Reverend Dr. Robert L. Brashear, Chair, Interfaith Assembly, Pastor, West Park Presbyterian Church, Manhattan

Dr. Diane Steinman, Director, Interfaith Network for Immigration Reform

Marc Greenberg, Executive Director, Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing

Bishop Andrew St. John, Rector, Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration, Manhattan

Reverend James Addison, Life Experience and Faith Sharing Association

Reverend Moira K. Ahearne, Co-Pastor, the Community Church of Little Neck, Queens

Rabbi Daniel Aldar, Brotherhood Synagogue, Manhattan

Rabbi Renni S. Altman, Associate Dean, Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, Rabbinical Program

Reverend Ian Alterman, Pastor, Spirit Fellowship Ministries, Manhattan

Reverend Laurie J. Andersen, Interim Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Queens

Olav Athayde, Advocacy Representative, Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church, Manhattan

Reverend Anne Auchincloss, Deacon, The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, Manhattan

Reverend Jean-Miguel Auguste, Pastor, St. Pius X RC Church, Queens

Reverend John Backe, Pastor, Christ Lutheran Church, Staten Island

Minister Regina Baird Haag, Adirondack Friends Meeting, South Glens Falls

Reverend Christopher Ballard, Rector, Trinity-St. John's Episcopal Church, Hewlett

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Reverend Dr. Stephen Bauman, Senior Minister, Christ Church United Methodist

Deacon Dennis Barton, Middle Collegiate Church, Manhattan

Reverend Dr. Scott Black Johnston, Senior Pastor, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, Manhattan

Rabbi Steven Blane, Sim Shalom Synagogue

Reverend Paul Block, Pastor, Transfiguration Lutheran Church, Bronx

Reverend Dr. Mark Bozzuti-Jones, Priest for Pastoral Care & Community, Trinity Wall Street, Manhattan

Reverend Dr. Kathy Bozzuti-Jones, Associate Director of Faith Formation & Education, Trinity Wall Street, Manhattan

Reverend S. David Brettell, Pastor, Glen Morris Presbyterian Church, Queens

Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor, VP, WUPJ

Rabbi Marcelo R. Bronstein, Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, Manhattan

Reverend Dr. Elise Brown, Pastor, Advent Lutheran Church, Manhattan

Adam Bucko, Hab Community & The Reciprocity Foundation

Raj Bhushan, Past President, Sathya Sai Baba Center of Manhattan

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Reverend Lawrence Byrne, All Saints Episcopal Church, Bayside, NY

Reverend Matthew Calkins, Grace Episcopal Church, Queens

Father Michael J. Callaghan, Executive Director, Nazareth Housing, Pastor, The Oratory Church of St. Boniface

Reverend Dr. James Campbell, Pastor, Broadway United Church of Christ, Manhattan

Father Michael Carnevale, St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Manhattan

Reverend Luis-Alfredo Cartagena Zayas, Associate Pastor, Park Avenue Christian Church, Manhattan

Revered Mark Chaffin, Chaplain, Baptist Health Nursing and Rehab Center, Troy

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Reverend Stephen Chinlund, Former Director, Episcopal Social Services, NYC

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Rabbi Ayelet S. Cohen, Manhattan

Father David Convertino, St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Manhattan

Father Joseph Covoto, OFM, Church of St. Francis, Manhattan

Larry Cox, Director, Kairos: The Center for Religions, Rights, and Social Justice

Reverend Dr. Bronco Crooke, Trinity United Methodist Church, Queens

Reverend Sandy Damhof, Pastor, Journey United Methodist Church of Christ, Albany

Reverend Chase Danford, Episcopal Diocese of New York

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Reverend Delois Davis, Pastor, Community United Methodist Church, Queens

Reverend Karen Davis-Lawson, St. George Episcopal Church, Queens

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Sister Carol De Angelo, Director, Sisters of Charity of New York, Peace and Justice

Dan DeBrucker-Cota, Ruling Elder, Robinson Memorial Presbyterian Church, Syracuse

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Swamini Sri Devi, Director, Lalitamba Mandiram Ashram, Manhattan

Mary Dewar, Chair, Public Issues Committee, Long Island Council of Churches

Reverend Nathanial Dixon, Senior Minister, St. Stephen's United Methodist Church, Bronx

Jeremiah Drake, Mission Social Justice Commissioner, The Riverside Church, Manhattan

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Rabbi Michael Feinberg, Director, New York City Labor Religion Coalition

Reverend Dr. Dorothy Fentress, Founder, Samaritans Outreach Ministries

Rabbi Brian Fink, Director/Community Organizer, Engage Jewish Service Corps, JCC, Manhattan

Reverend Katherine Flexer, Rector, St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Manhattan

Reverend Lawrence D. Ford, OFM, Pastor, Church of the Holy Name of Jesus (RC)

Reverend Dr. Mary Foulke Rector, St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Harlem

Sheikha Feriha Friedrich, Nur Ashki Jerrahi Sufi Order

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Sister Eileen Gannon, Executive Team Member, Dominican Sisters of Sparkill

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Pastor Carl Garrison, Associate Minister of Community of Hope, Manhattan Church of Christ, Manhattan

Jason Glass, Stake President, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Woodside

Rabbi Jonah Geffen, former Rabbinic Director, J Street

Reverend Calvin Gibson, Senior Pastor, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Queens

Reverend Joel A. Gibson, Director of Faith Based Initiatives, Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies

Reverend Dr. Richard Gilbert, Board Member, Interfaith Impact of New York State, Rochester

Reverend Linda Gold, Minister, First Reformed Church of College Point, Queens

Rabbi Megan Goldman, Senior Jewish Educator, Columbia/Barnard Hillel, the Kraft Center for Jewish Life

Reverend Dr. Cynthia Griffin, Psychoanalyst, Manhattan

Reverend Bruce Groder, National Outreach Director, American Clergy Leadership Conference

Reverend Mark Hallinan, S.J., Pastor, Our Lady of Mount Carmel + St. Benedicta Church, S.I.

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Father Stephen Holton, Associate Rector, Grace Church in New York

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Katy Homans, Clerk, 15th St. Religious Society of Friends Shelter, Manhattan

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Reverend Lisa D. Jenkins, Senior Pastor, St. Matthew's Baptist Church of Harlem, Manhattan

Reverend Gregory L. Johnson, Inter-Faith Minister for Family Caregiving, Marble Collegiate Church, Manhattan

Reverend Karen Johnson, Director, Recovery and Community Initiatives, Project Hospitality, Staten Island

Chan Jamoona, Director, United Hindu Cultural Council of North America, Inc., Queens

Marilyn Joseph, Educator, Calvary Baptist Church, Bronx

Rabbi Rachel Kahn-Troster, Dir. of Program, T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights

Reverend Jes Kast-Keat, Associate Minister, West End Collegiate Church, Manhattan

Rabbi Jeremy Kalmanofsky, Congregation Ansche Chesed, Manhattan

Sister Maryellen Kane, CSJ, St. Mary Magdalene Church, Springfield Gardens

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Father Hugo Nacciarone, SJ. The Church of our Lady of Mt. Carmel-St. Benedicta, Staten Island

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Carol Nixon, Director of Social Justice, The Riverside Church, Manhattan

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Reverend Michelle Nickens, Metro Baptist Church, Manhattan

Aparnna Nistala, President, Manhattan Sathya Sai Baba Center

Reverend Debra Northern, The Riverside Church, Manhattan

Rabbi Shuli Passow, Director of Community Engagement, Congregation B'nai Jeshurun

Reverend Patrick O'Connor, Senior Pastor, First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica

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Father Xavier John Seubert, OFM, Priest, Church of St. Francis of Assisi, Manhattan

Pandit Umesh Sharma, Priest, Shri Visnu Mandir Hindu Temple, Bronx

Reverend Chris Shelton, Pastor, Broadway Presbyterian Church, Manhattan

Dorothy M. Scholz-Beyer, Associate in Ministry, ELCA, Manhattan Conference of the Metropolitan NY Synod

Reverend Gary Schulz, Pastor, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Queens

Sister Margaret M. Siroka, Director, Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation, Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement, Garrison

Rev. Canon Victoria Sirota, Cathedral Church St John the Divine, New York

Father Francis Skelly, Pastor, Immaculate Conception, Bronx

Rabbi Felicia L. Sol, Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, Manhattan

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Sister Florence Speth, Director, Fox House, Bronx

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Reverend Scott Stearman, Ph.D., Pastor, Metro Baptist Church, Manhattan

Reverend Ondrej (Andrew) Stehlik, Pastor, Rutgers Presbyterian Church. Manhattan

Rabbi Michael Strassfeld, Retired, Society for the Advancement of Judaism, Manhattan

Reverend Charles "Chick" Straut, New York Methodist Conference

Minister Eve Stevens, Unitarian Universalist Church of Utica, Cohoes

Reverend James Sudbrock, Pastoral Associate, Advent Lutheran Church, NYC

Reverend Edward Sunderland, Associate Rector, St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, Exec. Dir, Crossroads Community, Manhattan

Charles Sugrim, Church Council Chairperson, Trinity United Methodist Church, Queens

Reverend Marie A. Tatro, Curate, St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church, Brooklyn

Reverend Kenneth Thomas, Presbytery of New York City

Reverend Adriene Thorne, Executive Minister, Middle Collegiate Church, Manhattan

Sister Phyllis Tierney, Coordinator, Justice and Peace, Sisters of St. Joseph, Rochester

Pastor Chris Travis, Senior Pastor, Everyday Christian Church, Manhattan

Reverend Shannan Vance-Ocampo, Transitional Presbyter, Albany Presbytery, Troy

April Vega, Minister of Worship and the Arts, The Riverside Church, Manhattan

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Sunita Vishwanathan, Co-Founder, Sadhana: Coalition of Progressive Hindus

Reverend Kino Vitet, St. Joseph Episcopal Church, Queens

Hemant Wadhwani, Hindu American Seva Charities

Revered Donald B. Wahlig, Associate Pastor, Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, Manhattan

Reverend Michael A. Walrond, Jr., Senior Pastor, First Corinthian Baptist Church, Manhattan

Reverend Jon M. Walton, Senior Pastor, First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York

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Reverend Randy Weber, Associate Pastor, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, Manhattan

Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW

Hazzan Michael Weis, Cantor, Brotherhood Synagogue, Manhattan

Reverend Dr. Anette Westermark, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church of Newtown, Queens

Reverend Suzanne Wiedel-Pace, The Riverside Church, Manhattan

Pastor Gary Wiley, Lead Pastor, Trinity Grace Church, Washington Heights Parish

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Reverend Dustin Wright, Pastor, Messiah Lutheran Church, Schenectady

Kevin Wright, Minister of Education, The Riverside Church, Manhattan

Larissa Wohl, Social Action Coordinator, Congregation B'nai Jeshurun

Reverend Dr. Johnny Ray Youngblood, Executive Pastor, Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church, Brooklyn

--- Organizational affiliations are listed for identification purposes only ---For info about the Faith Leader Sign-on Campaign, contact Interfaith Assembly, Marc Greenberg, ED, Marc@iahh.org, 917-913-0098/212-316-3171, iahh.org