Dear [ELECTED OFFICIAL],

I’m writing today to express my support for lasting solutions to homelessness in Austin, in Texas, and across the country. I’m one of your constituents, and thousands of our neighbors face housing instability every day. We can make a difference in their lives and in the lives of every person who calls this community home if we’re willing to support evidence-based, lasting solutions to homelessness.

Homes end homelessness. Evidence shows permanent housing solutions based on a [Housing First model](https://endhomelessness.org/what-housing-first-really-means/) help people end their homelessness quickly and remain stably housed for longer than other interventions. Here in Austin, Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programs (all of which are based on the Housing First model) are very successful in keeping people housed long term; 97% of people connected to a PSH program in 2019 in Austin either remained housed or successfully exited that program. Nationally, [research shows](https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/housing-first-fact-sheet.pdf) PSH and Rapid Re-Rehousing (RRH) programs based on the Housing First model are between 75% and 98% effective at keeping people housed over a two-year reporting period.

But we simply don’t have enough PSH or RRH units to support all our neighbors. Here in Austin, we need thousands of additional units of Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Re-Housing just to meet the current, not to mention the anticipated need due to the pandemic recession.

Decades of disinvestment in affordable housing and social supports have led us to this moment of national crisis, and only the decision to reverse that trend will get us out of it. The richest country in the world can and should provide this basic necessity to every person, regardless of their current situation. We have a moral obligation to provide this basic human right to every one of our neighbors.

I know what you’re thinking, and you’re right: It won’t be cheap. But consider this: Evidence shows it actually saves the public money in the long run to invest in permanent housing rather than emergency services – shelters, hospitals, jails – for people experiencing homelessness. [One study](https://shnny.org/uploads/Supportive_Housing_in_Denver.pdf) shows a Housing First program saved $31,545 on emergency services per person over a two-year period; [another](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17592778/) estimates savings of $23,000 per person per year compared to a shelter program.

Take the Terrace at Oak Springs, a Permanent Supportive Housing development in Austin. Integral Care, the nonprofit that operates the development, analyzed data for 50 clients from the six months before they moved into the program and the six months after, and found the following:

* Over 70% reduction in arrests.
* Over 60% reduction in medical inpatient admissions.
* Almost 90% reduction in medical inpatient bed days.

In all, these reductions cut the cost to the public by more than $330,000 over the course of those six months. Think of the savings to the public if we were to invest fully in lasting solutions to homelessness like permanent housing for every person who needs it. You can help make this happen.

Housing is healthcare. Housing is harm reduction. Housing is a human right. I ask again that you support evidence-based, lasting solutions to homelessness to provide this basic right to every one of our neighbors.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]