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President-elect Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

12/2/2024

Dear President-elect Trump,

As state representative for the city of Johnstown, Pa., I offer sincere congratulations on your resounding election victory – and my support for your high priority of eliminating waste and duplication in the federal budget.

I believe your commendable effort at curtailing excessive federal spending could start with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s bloated funding of the Johnstown Housing Authority at a level that far exceeds our local need for public housing.

Johnstown’s population has shrunk considerably since the 1960s, plunging from nearly 54,000 to fewer than 18,000 people, yet HUD inexplicably continues to fund 1,504 public housing units that are no longer justified by true local demand.

It’s estimated that HALF of the people living in Johnstown Housing Authority public housing came from outside Cambria County, primarily Philadelphia. News reports have documented that many of them stay in Johnstown public housing just long enough to obtain a Section 8 Program voucher, which they then “port” back home, tapping the Johnstown Housing Authority’s federal funds to foot the bill for their subsidized housing in Philadelphia and elsewhere.

HUD allows this gaming of the system to continue, creating a revolving door of poverty, crime and drain on local resources. Our county district attorney and Johnstown school superintendent have both noted its debilitating effects on Johnstown.

I have been outspoken in calling on the Johnstown Housing Authority and its primary funding source HUD to stop this madness, by right-sizing our public housing units to match our current need. That welcomed and fiscally responsible change is easily justified by these eye-opening numbers:

- Johnstown has five times the amount of public housing units as other cities its size.
- 80 families per month (mainly from Philadelphia) are moving to Johnstown just to live in public housing.
- 50% of the JHA's 1,504 public housing units are occupied by people who came from outside Cambria County.
- \$12,500 is the average household income of those relocating here for public housing. Many of these residents stay long enough to obtain a Section 8 voucher, then return to where they came from, sticking the JHA with a rent subsidy bill that has reached \$1.8 million per year.

I am able and eager to work with you and your administration to address this matter, which would greatly benefit our local community while addressing your goal of improving government efficiency.

Sincerely



Frank Burns

Pennsylvania State Representative

72nd Legislative District