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Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services 315 Front Street West, 7th Floor Toronto, ON M7A 0B8

Subject: Proposal for a 'Homes for All' Supportive Housing Initiative

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing as a community outreach worker in Ottawa to propose a 'Homes for All' Supportive Housing Initiative aimed at addressing homelessness and the shortage of affordable housing in our province. This program would focus on creating new supportive and affordable housing units for individuals and families experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, coupled with wraparound social services to help residents maintain stable housing and improve their quality of life.

Description of the Proposed Program: The Homes for All initiative would involve the construction and renovation of affordable housing units (such as apartments or tiny homes) in communities across Ontario, with priority given to regions experiencing high rates of homelessness. Each housing development would incorporate on-site support services, including mental health counseling, addiction treatment, employment assistance, and life-skills training. The program would be delivered in partnership with municipalities and local non-profit housing organizations. It could also include rental subsidy components or portable housing benefits to help low-income individuals afford existing rental units while new units are being built.

Objectives:

- Provide safe, stable, and affordable housing for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including individuals, families, and youth.
- Integrate support services with housing to address underlying issues (such as mental health, domestic violence, or unemployment) that contribute to chronic homelessness.
- Reduce the number of people living in shelters or on the streets and shorten the duration of homelessness for individuals who experience it.

Expected Outcomes:

- Significant reduction in chronic homelessness in participating communities over the next 5 years, as measured by annual homeless population counts (with a goal of reducing chronic homelessness by 20% or more).
- Improved well-being and self-sufficiency of residents in the supportive housing program, demonstrated by higher employment rates, better health outcomes, and successful transitions to independent living.
- Cost savings for emergency services and healthcare systems, as stable housing with supports can lead to fewer emergency shelter stays, hospital visits, and interactions with law enforcement.

Rationale for Government Support: Homelessness is a pressing social issue in Ontario, with thousands of people sleeping in shelters or outdoors every night. This crisis not only affects those individuals and families directly but also places a strain on social services, healthcare, and community resources. Evidence from other jurisdictions shows that 'Housing First' approaches - where individuals are provided with housing and then given support - significantly improve outcomes and can be more cost-effective than relying on emergency measures alone. By funding the Homes for All initiative, the government would be upholding its commitment to protect the most vulnerable members of society and making substantial progress toward the goal of ending chronic homelessness in Ontario. Moreover, investing in affordable housing stimulates local construction jobs and creates healthier, safer communities for everyone.

In closing, I urge the Government of Ontario to consider the Homes for All Supportive Housing Initiative. Ensuring that every Ontarian has a safe place to call home, along with the necessary supports, is not only a moral responsibility but also a wise investment in our province's social and economic well-being. Thank you for your time and consideration. I would welcome any opportunity to discuss this proposal further.

Sincerely,
[Signature]
Habiba Ali