**Faith Leaders 4 NY/NY Housing**

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo

State of New York

Executive Chamber

New York State Capitol

Albany, New York 12224

 December 30, 2020

Dear Governor Cuomo:

The holiday season provides a rare opportunity for us to take a step back from the hectic pace of our modern lives, enjoy the comforts of home, and reconnect with family and friends.

Sadly, there are far too many New Yorkers who do not have this luxury. As a result of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, more of our vulnerable brothers and sisters than ever before lack safe, affordable and independent housing. Each night, even as the temperature drops below freezing, they are effectively told that there is “no room at the inn” – no place for them to seek the solace and warmth. During this sacred season, New Yorkers must be assured that despite this period of darkness for so many, the light of a safe and secure home will prevail.

The situation statewide has reached crisis proportions. It is nothing short of a moral emergency, and one that troubles us deeply.

New York faced a homelessness crisis even before the pandemic struck. As you know, a recent federal study estimated there were nearly 100,000 residents experiencing homelessness on any given day. As a result of this unprecedented public health emergency, which has disproportionately impacted low-income and minority New Yorkers, these numbers have risen to alarming and historic new heights.

As spiritual leaders who spend our days and nights in service to our most vulnerable neighbors, we have seen first-hand the devastation this pandemic has wrought. We are all working to do more with less, stretching our already limited resources to help those in need. But we cannot do it alone.

And it is why we collectively call on you to fund the next phase of your commitment to develop 20,000 new units of permanent supportive housing over fifteen years.

Five years ago, you answered our calls with a historic, nation-leading pledge to create 20,000 new supportive units over the next fifteen years. New York subsequently committed five years of dedicated funding, but that funding has now dried up – right when the need is greatest.

A home is a place of peace, prosperity, and provision, but far too many New Yorkers are denied this basic human right. Investing in supportive housing is smart from a fiscal perspective, generating much-needed development and jobs and also reducing long-term costs of incarceration, hospitalization and shelters – all of which are far more expensive than safe and permanent housing.

More importantly, we collectively have a moral and spiritual obligation to protect the least among us. The precept “whoever saves a life saves the world” has its roots in many religious teachings, and never before has it rung as true as it does today. As we work to save the world, so to speak, from the scourge of COVID-19 – we must recognize that the task requires us to treat each and every life as sacred in order to truly succeed. One homeless individual without a safe haven and at risk of exposure to the elements or illness in this holiday season is simply too many.

In the spirt of this season, we the undersigned, cry out for justice in these dark times and urge you to remember that in New York, there should always be room at the inn.

In Faith,

Reverend Andrea Abbott, Minister, First Universalist Society of Central Square, Baldwinsville, NY

Reverend Amos Acree, Retired Pastor, Faith Community Nurse, East Aurora Christian Church (Disciples of Christ, East Aurora, NY

Minister James Addison, Operations Manager, Life Experience and Faith Sharing Associates, New York NY

Ms. Cassandra Agredo, Executive Director, Xavier Mission Inc. New York, NY

Sister Joan Agro, Congregational Secretary, Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, Blauvelt, NY

Ms. Sharon Albano, Educator, Zioness Movement, Merrick, NY

Reverend Ian Alterman, Pastor, Spirit Fellowship Ministries, New York, NY

Reverend Susan Anderson-Smith, Associate Rector, St, Bartholomew’s Church, New York NY

Rabbi Andy Bachman, Executive Director, Jewish Community Project Downtown, New York. NY

Ms. Regina Baird Haag, Executive Director, Elsie K. Powell House, Inc, Old Chatham, NY

Reverend Beverly Bartlett, Associate Pastor, Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, NY

Reverend Sharon Baugh, Pastor, Hope Chapel, Utica, NY

Reverend Dr. Stephen Bauman, Senior Minister, Christ Church United Methodist Church, NYC, New York, NY

Reverend Dr. Alan Bentz-Letts, Retired Chaplain, New York, NY

Reverend Joy Bergfalk, Executive Director, Life Listening Resources, DBA Coffee Connections, Rochester, NY

Reverend Kenneth Boller, Pastor, Church of St. Francis Xavier, New York, NY

Reverend Francis Breen, Priest, Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Maryknoll. NY

Father Michael Callaghan, President, Board of Directors, Emergency Shelter Network, New York, NY

Reverend Luis-Alfredo Cartagena Zayas, Outreach Pastor, Park Avenue Christian Church, UCC, New York, NY

Ms. Maria Cerualo, Criminal Justice Chair NAMI QN, Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock, Greenvale, NY

Reverend Karen Chamis, Resource Presbytery, Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse, Syracuse, NY

Reverend Joe Cleveland, Minister, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Saratoga Springs, Saratoga Springs, NY

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

Ms. Martha Cornell, Retired, Journey United Church of Christ, Delmar, NY

Rabbi Lindsey Danziger, Director of Organizing, Zioness Movement, New York, NY

Reverend Frederick Davie, Executive Vice President, New York Theological Seminary, New York, NY

Pastor Daniel DeBrucker-Cota, Organizer, Presbyterian Network to End Homelessness, New York, NY

Reverend Jennifer DeWeerth, Supply Preacher and College Administrator, United Church of Christ, Clinton, NY

Dr. Luz Marina Diaz, Director of Religious Education, Church of St. Francis Xavier, New York, NY

M. Barbara DiTommaso, Retired Exec. Dir., Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany’s Commission on Peace and Justice

Bishop Denise Donato, Pastor, Mary Magdalene Church, East Rochester, NY

Reverend Kaji Dousa, Senior Pastor, Park Avenue Christian Church, New York, NY

Ms. Mary Dugan, Peace and Justice Task Force Member, First Unitarian Church of All Souls, New York, NY

Reverend Deborah Duguid May, Dean, Episcopal Diocese of Rochester, NY, Naples, NY

Reverend Dr. Cheryl Ann Elfond, Pastor, Christ the King Lutheran Church, Vestal. NY

Reverend Andy Fey, Pastor, Gospel Chapel, Owego, NY

Mr. Edwin Figueroa, President, South Bronx Congress, Bronx, NY

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

Reverend Dr. Michael Ford, Senior Minister, Lake Avenue Memorial Baptist Church, Rochester, NY

Dr. Mary Foulke, Rector, St, Mary’s Episcopal Church, New York, NY

Reverend Cheryl Frank, Associate Pastor, Greece Baptist Church, Rochester, NY

Shaykha Fariha Friedrich, Shaykha, Nur Ashki Jerrahi Sufi Community, New York NY

Reverend David Gaewski, Conference Minister. New York Conference, UCC, Dewitt, NY

Reverend Darienne Gagné, Pastor, North Chatham United Methodist Church, North Chatham. NY

Sister Carol De Angelo, Director, Office of Peace, Justice and Integrity of Creation, Sisters of Charity of New York, New, NY

Minister Carl Garrison, Minister of Homeless Outreach, Manhattan Church of Christ, New York, NY

Reverend Ivy Gauvin, Pastor, St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Bemus Point, NY

Reverend Richard Gilbert, President, Interfaith Impact of NYS, Rochester. NY

Ms. Harlene Gilbert, School Psychologist, Temple Beth El, Geneva NY

Reverend Dr. Sheila H. Gillams, Senior Pastor, Shiloh Church of Christ, Disciples of Church, New York, NY

Pastor Bruce Gillette, Pastor, First Presbyterian Union Church in Oswego, NY

Pastor Denise Gisotti, Pastor, United Methodist Church – Congregational Care, FUMC Delmar, NY

Rabbi Deena Gottlieb, Associate Rabbi and Director of Jewish Life, Jewish Community Project of Lower Manhattan, NY

Rabbi Lauren Grabelle Herrmann, Society for Advancement of Judaism, New York, NY

Marc Greenberg, Executive Director, Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY

Reverend Steve Gretz, Senior Pastor, Greece Baptist Church, Rochester, NY

Reverend Dr. Charles B. Grimm, Fire Chaplain. Rush Fire Department, Scottsville, NY

Mr. Peter Gudaitis, Chair, Board of Directors. New York VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) New York, NY

Reverend Martin Hauser, Pastor, Grace and St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, New York NY

Reverend Patrick Heery, Pastor, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Auburn, NY

Reverend Rachel Helgeson, Pastor, Northminster Presbyterian Church, Endicott, NY

Reverend Dr. Peter Goodwin Heltzel, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) New York, NY

Reverend Trula Hollywood, Episcopal Priest, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Owego, NY

Reverend Stephen Holton, Rector, Christ Church, Warwick, NY

Ms. Katy Homans, Clerk, Friends Shelter, New York, NY

Bishop Kathy Hughes, Pastor, Central New York Church of the Living God, Utica, NY

Reverend Hans-J. R. Irmer, Pastoral Assistant, Messiah Lutheran Church, Rochester, NY

Ms. Alyce Peacequeen Morton-Johnson, Retired, Power of Three, Albany, NY

Apostle Alonzo Jordan, Overseer, God’s Open House for Everyone, Freeport, NY

Reverend Daniel Kearney, Pastor, Ascension Church, New York, NY

Mr. Casey Kemper, Board Member, Interfaith Affordable Housing Collaborative, New York, NY

Reverend Charles King, CEO, Housing Works, New York, NY

Reverend Heather Kirk-Davidoff, Minister, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Albany NY

Reverend Mark Koenig, Advocate for Social Ministries, Presbytery of NYC, New York, NY

Rabbi Irwin Kula, President, Clal—The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership, New York, NY

Mrs. Karen Lapierre, Office Manager. New York State Council of Churches, Albany NY

Reverend Gloria Lavine, Retired, Community Volunteer, The Reformed Church of Prince Bay, Staten Island. NY

Reverend Deborah Lee, Associate Rector, St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church, New York, NY

Most Reverend Jeremiah Lennox, Archdruid, Nemeton of the Ways, Cohoes, NY

Reverend Mark J. Lukens, Pastor, Bethany Congregational Church, UCC, East Rockaway, NY

Reverend John Macholz, Bishop, Upstate New York Synod, Rochester, NY

Reverend Dr. Sally Noland MacNichol, Co-Executive Director, CONNECT, Inc, New York, NY

Pastor Marsha J. Madore, Senior Pastor, Vienna/Berhards Bay UMC, Westmoreland, NY

Ms. Joan Malin, Clerk, Brooklyn Monthly Meeting, Brooklyn, NY

Rabbi Marc Margolius, Senior Programs Director, Institute for Jewish Spirituality, New York. NY

Reverend Taryn Mattice, Chaplain, Protestant Cooperative Ministry of Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

Reverend Elizabeth Maxwell, Rector, Church of the Ascension Episcopal Church, New York, NY

Ms. Jill McLellan, Quaker Representative to local Interfaith Council, Buffalo Quaker Meeting, Stanley, NY

Reverend Ted Miller, Pastor, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Salt Point, NY

Reverend Dr. Karen Monk, District Superintendent, NY Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, White Plains, NY

Rabbi Susie Moskowitz, Rabbi, Temple Beth Torah, Melville, NY

Father John Mulreany, Associate Pastor, Church of St. Francis Xavier, New York, NY

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

Reverend Monshin Paul Naamon, Abbot, Tendai Buddhist Institute, East Chatham, NY

Reverend Shumon Tamami Naamon, Managing Director, Karuna Tendai Dharam Center / Tendai Buddhist Institute, East Chatham, NY

Reverend Abby Norton-Levering, Ministries Coordinator, Regional Synod of Albany (Reformed Church) Schenectady, NY

Mr. Chibueze Okorie, Minister, Church of the Gethsemane, Brooklyn, NY

Reverend John Paarlberg, Member, NYS Council of Churches Executive Committee, Synod of Albany Reformed Church in America

Reverend Joseph Perdue, Pastor, First Baptist Church of Cooperstown, Cooperstown, NY

Reverend Dr. Peter W. Peters, Co-Chair of Reach Advocacy, Inc, St. Luke and St. Simon Cyrene Episcopal Church, Rochester, NY

Minister Dr. Victoria Phillips, CEO, Visionary V Ministries, New York, NY

Reverend Deacon Dorothy Pierce, Vocational Deacon. The Episcopal Diocese of Central New York, Whitney Point, NY

Cantor Ayalet Porzecanski, Cantor, Brooklyn Heights Synagogue, Brooklyn, NY

Reverend Steven Price, Pastor, Community Christian Church, Rochester, NY

Reverend Tamara K. Razzano, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Little Falls, NY

Reverend Paul Rees-Rohrbacher, Pastor, Retired, St, John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, Albany, NY

Dr. Sylvia Reimer, Retired Physician, First United Methodist Church, Watertown, NY

Bishop Raymond Rivera, President and Senior Pastor, Latino Pastoral Action Center, Bronx, NY

Reverend Aileen Robbins, Senior Pastor, Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church, Rochester, NY

Mr. Eric Russell, Sangha Member, Tendai Buddhist Temple, East Chatham, NY

Reverend Charles Ryu, Lead Pastor, Morningside United Methodist Church, New York, NY

Reverend Mark Salmon, Minister, South Salem Presbyterian Church, NY

Ms. Linda Sarsour, Executive Director, Mpower Change, New York, NY

Reverend James Coy Sheehan, University Chaplain, Archdiocese of New York, NY

Mr. John Sheehan, Director, Ecumenical Outreach Partnership, New York, NY

Reverend Chris Shelton, Pastor, Broadway Presbyterian Church, New York, NY

Reverend Dr. William S. Shillady, Executive Director and CEO, United Methodist City Society

Bishop Prince Singh, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester, NY

Reverend Frank Skelly, Basilica of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Brooklyn, NY

Mrs. Mary Smith, Communications Director, Church Women United of New York State, Rochester, NY

Ms. Alexa Smith, Chapter Leader, Zioness NYC Chapter, NY

Reverend Monko Susan Spang, Sangha Leader, Albany Tendai Buddhist Sangha, Albany, NY

Reverend Tanya Spencer, Pastor, Good Shepherd Community of Faith, West Seneca, NY

Honorable Reverend Dr. Michael Strong, Chief Administrator, Strong Families Deliverance Ministries, Inc., Bronx. NY

Reverend Jackie Sullivan, Retired Chaplain, Lake Avenue Baptist Church, Rochester, NY

Reverend Marti Swords-Horrell, Pastor, First United Methodist Church, Oneonta, New York

Reverend Jeffery Thompson, Pastor, Amity Baptist Church, Jamaica. NY

Reverend Adriene Thorne, Senior Pastor, First Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn. NY

Ms. Mary Thorpe, Church Secretary, St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, Spencer, NY

Reverend Phil Tom, Consultant, The Riverside Church in NY, NY

Mrs. Kate Toth, Executive Director, Bricks and Mortals, NY, NY

Mr. Richard Van Deusen, Member. Board of Trustees, The New York Society for Ethical Culture, NY, NY

Reverend Judith Van Kennen, Pastor, Emmanuel Congregational UCC, Massena, NY

Reverend Dr. Tom Vencuss, President, Board of Directors, New York Disaster Interfaith Services, NY, NY

Ms. Sunita Viswanath, Cofounder, Sadhana Coalition of Progressive Hindus, Brooklyn, NY

Rabbi Jeremy Wiederhorn, President, New York Board of Rabbis, New York, NY

Reverend Dr. Flora Wilson Bridges, Pastor, Rendall Memorial Presbyterian Church, New York, NY

Reverend Joyce Wilson-Newton, Reverend, Saved by God’s Grace Ministries, Rochester, NY

Reverend Richard Witt, Executive Director, Rural & Migrant Ministry, Poughkeepsie, NY

Ms. Larissa Wohl, Assistant Director of Community Engagement, Congregation B’Nai Jeshurun, NY, NY

Elder Lisa Wright, Ruling Elder, St. Augustine Presbyterian Church, Bronx, NY

Reverend Cheong-Mo Yang, Protestant Chaplain, Eastern NY Correctional Facility, Napanock, NY

Mr. Charles Zalasko, Clerk, Orchard Park Friends Meeting (Quaker) Orchard Park, NY

For further information about Faith Leaders 4 NY/NY Housing Contact:

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*137 signatories - as of 12/30/20*

*Organizational Affiliations are listed for Identification Purposes Only*