



November 6, 2023

The Honorable Kathy Hochul  
Governor of the State of New York  
NYS Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul:

For more than forty years, New York's bedrock Right to Shelter has served as an inviolable baseline of humanity and decency, ensuring that people without homes are not relegated to bedding down in public spaces, dangerously exposed to the elements. It is because of this right that New York City does not have the vast tent encampments seen in so many other cities around the country. Since 1981, the Right to Shelter has meant that hundreds of thousands of homeless individuals have had an alternative to sleeping on the streets. Simply put, the Right to Shelter saves lives, and is integral to the humanity of our community.

We, the undersigned organizations, are vehemently opposed to your and Mayor Adams' efforts to undermine the legal Right to Shelter for both new arrival and longtime New Yorkers, and see such efforts as not only an abrogation of your moral and legal duties, but as a betrayal of the proud history of New York State as a beacon of humane and progressive values as expressed in Article XVII of the New York State Constitution, stating:

*The aid, care and support of the needy are public concerns and shall be provided by the state and by such of its subdivisions, and in such manner and by such means, as the legislature may from time to time determine.*

Further, we urge you to cease spreading the false narrative that people from other nations would simply cease coming to New York City if there were no Right to Shelter. People come to New York because it has a well-earned reputation as a welcoming and tolerant city of humane values, of opportunity, and of diverse cultures. That will not change, nor do we believe it should change. And thus gutting the Right to Shelter will not deter people from coming here. In fact, between 1970 and 1980, roughly 80,000 immigrants per year came into the city – *before* there was a Right to Shelter.

Destroying the legal Right to Shelter for homeless New Yorkers and newcomers would have a devastating impact on our community, would cause irreparable harm to countless people who lack a safe place to sleep, and would do nothing to solve the problems you are trying to address.

With respect to solving those problems, we applaud you for the commitments you have made to help new arrivals process work authorizations and find employment and housing throughout the state, and we eagerly await updates to see how your plan does in fact help alleviate the strains on the relief systems.

We do, however, continue to urge you to use the full authority and resources of your office to do more by implementing a comprehensive statewide decompression and resettlement plan for the new arrivals. New Yorkers throughout the state are clearly anxious for a clear and coordinated response from your office.

This is a moment in history that will define your legacy, and we stand ready to work with you to help ensure that all in our state – whether longtime New Yorkers or new arrivals – have access to decent shelter, sufficient food, and a clear pathway to housing and stability.

It is time to end the chaos, to stand up for what's right, and to ensure that no one in need is ever relegated to sleeping on the streets.

Sincerely,

Coalition for the Homeless  
The Legal Aid Society  
For the Many  
Hunger Free America  
Coalition for Homeless Youth  
Cabrini Immigrant Services of NYC  
Ulster Immigrant Defense Network  
Worker Justice Center of NY, Inc.  
Equality New York  
Transnational Villages Network – Red de Pueblos Transnacionales  
Princess Diana Foundation  
Jackson Heights Immigrant Solidarity Network  
Henry Street Settlement  
Saratoga Immigration Coalition  
The Partnership To End Homelessness  
Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC)  
Community Voices Heard  
The Gathering for Justice  
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York  
Open Hearts Initiative  
Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing  
New York Civil Liberties Union/ACLU of New York  
Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development (ANHD)  
Center for Community Alternatives  
BronxWorks

Safe Horizon  
IMPACCT Brooklyn  
Cooper Square Committee  
Fifth Avenue Committee  
Neighbors Helping Neighbors  
The Interfaith Alliance of Rochester  
Housing Justice for All  
New York County Defender Services  
VOCAL-NY  
RENA (Riverside Edgecombe Neighborhood Association)  
New Economy Project  
Met Council on Housing  
NY Working Families Party  
Housing Rights Initiative  
Unlock NYC  
Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition  
Housing Works  
Catholic Migration Services  
Caribbean Equality Project  
New York City Community Land Initiative  
This Land is Ours CLT  
Open New York  
Neighbors Together  
Western Queens Community Land Trust  
Riverside Language Program, Inc.  
Saving Justice newsletter  
Sanctuary for Families  
Samaritan Daytop Village, Inc  
United Madrassi Association Inc.  
The Ali Forney Center  
Refugee and Immigrant Support Services of Emmaus, Inc.  
Corporation for Supportive Housing  
Strong Economy For All Coalition  
Roads to Success  
University Settlement  
United Neighborhood Houses  
The Health & Housing Consortium  
Volunteers of America-Greater New York  
American Civic Association  
The Harding Ford Vision, Inc  
Brooklyn Level Up  
Parents Supporting Parents NY  
Build For Good  
The Children's Village

Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ)  
UHAB  
WIN – Women in Need, Inc.  
Public Health Solutions  
Urban Pathways  
Covenant House New York  
Workers United NY NJ Regional Joint Board a/w SEIU  
Rising Ground, Inc.  
Invest In Our New York  
Citizen Action of New York  
Women’s Housing and Economic Development Corporation  
Metropolitan Community Church of New York  
Mobilization for Justice  
New York City Employment and Training Coalition  
National Youth Rights Association – NYRA  
Health x Housing Lab at NYU Langone Health  
Tenants & Neighbors  
UM Church of the Village  
Children’s Rights  
Make the Road NY  
New York Legal Assistance Group  
The New York Women’s Foundation  
Shower Power, Inc.