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March 16, 2021

Re: Supporting Source of Income Discrimination policy for multi-family developments who receive tax incentives within the City of San Antonio

Dear Mayor and City Councilmembers,

We write to express our support of a policy that would *end voucher discrimination by multi-family developments that receive tax incentives from the City of San Antonio*. We believe this is a common-sense policy that would greatly expand safe, sanitary and affordable housing options to those who need it most.

San Antonio has an affordable housing crisis. As federal funding for public housing dwindles, Housing Choice Vouchers (also known as Section 8 vouchers) have emerged as the preferred option to house families in the lowest income bracket. Yet, in San Antonio, 14,600 households currently sit on the voucher waiting list in hopes of finding a place from only 2,287 owners who will accept vouchers. Families can expect to spend 4 – 7 years waiting for a voucher. To further exacerbate this crisis, about half of all voucher-holding families are unable to find somewhere that will accept their voucher. They are often forced to return their voucher and start their housing search from scratch.

This city has a clear understanding of the deep need in our community. You have passed a multitude of measures to help those who are struggling to stay in their homes, including the creation of one of the largest rent and mortgage relief funds in the country. The source of income discrimination policy provides an opportunity to help San Antonians gain access to affordable homes that are already developed with taxpayer funds. Unlike most affordable housing initiatives, this is not asking for additional funding nor development of a new program, it only intends to expand access to already existing units.

With your vote, we can catalyze an increase of affordable housing without having to tap into funds set aside for affordable housing projects. The City of San Antonio can continue to lead Texas in its efforts to increase housing equity and be an example of acceptance and support for those most in need. With this pandemic increasing the affordability gap, now, more than ever, we must find new ways to increase housing opportunities with the limited funding we have available. We hope you will support vote yes to ban discrimination for voucher holders in properties subsidized by public funds.. We are hopeful this will influence more cities to follow in San Antonio's footsteps.

Sincerely,

Christina Rosales  
Deputy Director