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October 24, 2023

Jessica Lemann  
Senior Associate State Director, AARP Texas  
1905 Aldrich St., Suite 210  
Austin, TX 78723

Mayor Kirk Watson  
Mayor Pro Tem Paige Ellis  
Members of the Austin City Council  
Austin City Hall  
301 W Second St., Second Floor  
Austin, TX 78701

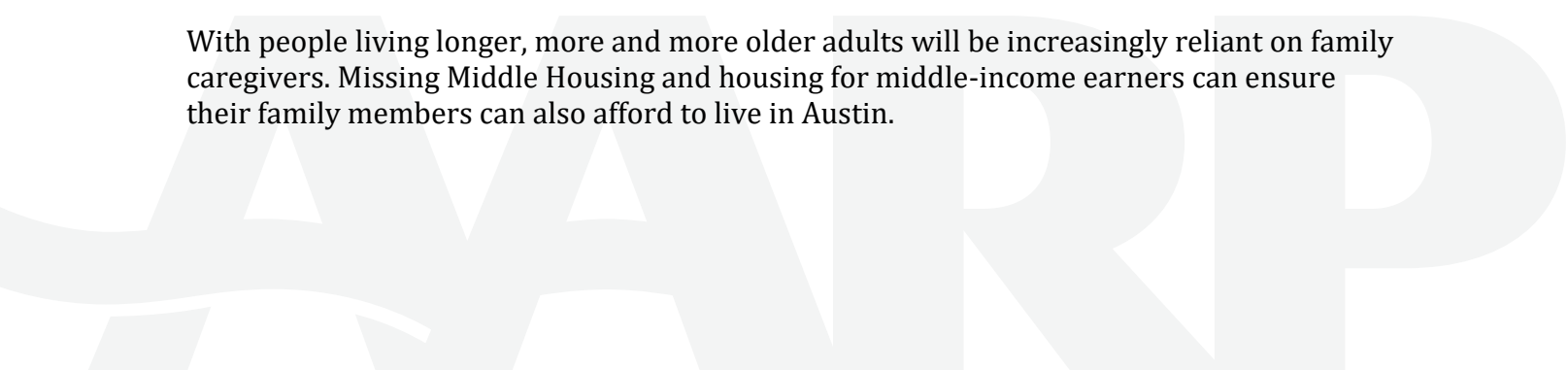
Dear Mayor Watson, Mayor Pro Tem Ellis, and members of the Austin City Council,

I am writing on behalf of AARP Texas in support of the changes to the City of Austin Land Development Code being discussed at the joint meeting of the Austin City Council and the Austin Planning Commission. These changes include allowing three units per lot in single family residential districts, allowing tiny homes and RVs to serve as accessory dwelling units, and eliminating the dwelling unit occupancy limit for residential uses.

The 2021 [AARP Home and Community Preferences Survey](#) of adults age 18 or older shows that most Americans, including the 50-plus, prefer to live in walkable neighborhoods that offer a mix of housing and transportation options — and are close to jobs, schools, shopping, entertainment and green spaces. AARP believes that "Middle Housing" developments can meet these needs. By allowing three units per lot and making it easier for the average resident to add an accessory dwelling unit to their property, Missing Middle housing can become a reality for those who want it.

As the population of older Austinites grow, the importance of creating of a variety of housing options will only increase. Older homeowners who want to sell their residence and move into something nearby that's more affordable, compact, and accessible routinely discover such housing doesn't exist.

With people living longer, more and more older adults will be increasingly reliant on family caregivers. Missing Middle Housing and housing for middle-income earners can ensure their family members can also afford to live in Austin.



AARP Texas believes that these adjustments to zoning laws is an important and vital step to making Missing Middle housing a reality in Austin, and we ask for your support.

I encourage you to review AARP Livable Community's *Discovering and Developing Missing Middle Housing Guide* and *Re-Legalizing Missing Middle Housing Guide* at [AARP.org/MissingMiddleHousing](https://www.aarp.org/MissingMiddleHousing).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Jessica K. Lemann*

Jessica Lemann  
AARP Texas



Austin City Council Members,

On behalf of Austin EMS Association, I am writing to express our official endorsement of the HOME Act. Actively supporting measures to increase housing supply and affordable homeownership opportunity is fully aligned with the Association's mission to support our members so that we can live in city we serve.

We hope you will help.

As Chief Robert Luckritz has publicly stated, the lack of housing affordable to incoming cadets only worsens an alarming 20% staffing vacancy rate and makes recruitment and retention harder. HOME is intended to make homeownership more accessible and reverse the rising cost of housing that prices our members out of Austin's housing market.

Nearly 78% of EMS medics who work for the city and county live outside Austin because our city has become so unaffordable.

We are alarmed by the widening gap between our salaries and the cost of homes, which threatens the long-term sustainability of our city and the long-term health of Austin-Travis County EMS services. We are also concerned that as more of our members must move farther from Austin, they lose their ability to vote and choose the leaders and policies that accurately reflect their values.

We are essential members of this community. Like Austin's city, county, and state workers, teachers, nurses, and small business owners, we are the life force of this city, and we deserve the chance to thrive and be part of this community as neighbors.

We urge you to support HOME and make sure Austin can be a home for everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Selena Xie', with a stylized, cursive script.

Selena Xie

October 26, 2023

Austin City Council & Austin Planning Commission  
Austin City Hall  
301 W 2nd St  
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Mayor Watson, Austin City Council Members, and Austin Planning Commission Members:

First, thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to the residents of Austin and our Central Texas region. On behalf of CapMetro, I applaud your efforts to collaborate with each other to bring forward meaningful solutions to address Austin's housing and affordability challenges. Specifically, we support the City Council and Planning Commission working together to advance the proposed amendments to the City Code Chapter 25-2 (Zoning) to implement the Home Options for Middle-Income Empowerment (HOME) initiative. These proposed amendments have the potential to modify key elements in our current land development code to help provide more access to more housing and positive outcomes for more Austinites.

As you know, CapMetro cares deeply about the intersection of housing and affordability, and the impact both have on transportation. We can't have economic mobility without actual mobility, and we understand that as cities like Austin grow, it becomes increasingly important to develop policy, programs, and networks that support more options for well-connected, affordable density. As recent as this Monday at CapMetro's regular board meeting, our staff shared findings from our 2023 Origin and Destination study. We know from this work that density opens more opportunities for transit and transit thrives in density.

Fortunately, our federal partners agree that housing and transportation solutions must be thoughtful and complement each other. The potential impact of these amendments excites us for future funding opportunities at the federal level to advance more public transit projects for the benefit of CapMetro customers, residents, and visitors alike, and ultimately, improve our quality of life. Further, CapMetro is encouraged by the progress the HOME initiative would bring to bear in accessing new tools and simplified mechanisms for our ongoing and shared work around equitable transit-oriented developments; this supports not only transit customers, but also provides additional opportunities for spaces where community outcomes such as economic and workforce development, childcare and housing access and mobility occur together.

My team and I will closely follow current and ongoing discussions, including our community's feedback, and stand ready to support you by offering CapMetro's perspective. Please count us as a full partner in helping advance a more prosperous Austin.

Again, I appreciate your leadership, service, and commitment to our community. If you have any questions, please email at [Dottie.Watkins@capmetro.org](mailto:Dottie.Watkins@capmetro.org).

Sincerely,



Dottie L. Watkins  
President & CEO, CapMetro



**CONGRESS  
FOR THE NEW  
URBANISM  
CENTRAL TEXAS  
CHAPTER**

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October 20, 2023

Mayor Kirk Watson  
Mayor Pro Tem Paige Ellis,  
Council Members: Harper-Madison, Fuentes, Velasquez, Vela, Ryan Alter, Kelly,  
Pool, Qadri, and Alison Alter  
City Manager Jesus Garza

Dear Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, Councilmembers, and City Manager

On behalf of the Board of Directors of The Congress for the New Urbanism - Central Texas Chapter (CNU-CTX) we are writing to express our strong support for the HOME1 initiative proposed by Councilmember Pool to allow 3 residential homes per single family lot and to also express our support for the furtherance of other recent Council resolutions to remove parking requirements, to loosen compatibility standards, and to allow smaller residential lots (to 2,500 square feet).

We support the HOME1 and other Council initiatives for several reasons:

1. Austin faces a housing crunch for lower priced lots. Research conducted by HousingWorks and ABOR, among others, shows that high property values are hurting home owners paying property taxes and renters with leases, and by increasing the housing stock and allowing more small houses we can hope to see housing cost escalation slow down and with luck, level off.
2. The Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan states “To accommodate the increasing diversity of Austin area households, more housing options will be needed to address our demographic changes.”
3. We are also informed and guided by the Charter for the New Urbanism which states that “neighborhoods should be diverse in use and population” and also that within “neighborhoods, a broad range of housing types and price levels can bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction, strengthening the personal and civic bonds essential to an authentic community.”
4. Evidence presented by the University of California at Berkeley<sup>1</sup> shows that denser housing results in lower greenhouse gas emissions per household compared to less dense housing. This is because with denser housing:
  - a. Homes often share walls, thus conserving heat in cold temperatures and conserving cooling in warmer temperatures;
  - b. Destinations such as schools, shopping, recreation places, jobs, etc. are more likely to be closer, meaning shorter driving trips or more trips made by carpooling, walking, biking, scootering, etc.;
  - c. There is a greater likelihood of nearby mass transit stops, leading to fewer personal motor vehicle trips.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://coolclimate.berkeley.edu/> accessed October 2023.

5. These same factors that lead to reduced greenhouse gas emission also mean the residents are likely to save money on transportation and household utilities.
6. Increased housing density will be needed to support the federal grant requests for Project Connect, as more residents near transit generally leads to more transit ridership.
7. Increased housing entitlements do not raise property taxes. TCAD has been very explicit that property appraisals are based on comparables, and a lot with a duplex unit or three units is not comparable to a lot with one housing unit. Comparables are based on actual use of a property and not the zoning or entitlements.

We strongly encourage the City Council to approve HOME1 and to act quickly to implement other measures to boost Austin's housing stock and help provide homes and reduce sprawl and reduce greenhouse gas emissions per household. In addition to zoning code changes to allow more housing, we also encourage the City to look at local amendments to the building code, as well as the City's administrative processes to align the design and production of housing in Austin with the intent of this zoning change. This also provides for lower soft and hard costs associated with housing production.

Very respectfully yours,



Mateo Barnstone, Director  
CNU-CTX

Kirk Watson [kirk.watson@austintexas.gov](mailto:kirk.watson@austintexas.gov)  
Paige Ellis [paige.ellis@austintexas.gov](mailto:paige.ellis@austintexas.gov)  
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Alison Alter [alison.alter@austintexas.gov](mailto:alison.alter@austintexas.gov)



Dear Mayor and City Council Members,

On behalf of the Central Texas Building Trades, we are writing to express our official endorsement of the HOME Act that will help create more attainable housing opportunities for middle-income residents. CTBT's mission to support our members is fully aligned with efforts to create more housing we can afford, and options to live in the city we're so proud to build.

Our members will be needed for multiple critical infrastructure projects including Project Connect, the new terminal at Bergstrom International Airport, as well as multiple municipal and education district bond projects. We understand the urgent need to address the shortage of housing that is affordable to our members and their families, and we hope you will help by supporting the HOME Act.

HOME takes a crucial first step to making homeownership more accessible, and reversing the rising cost of housing that prices our members out of Austin's housing market. We are alarmed by the widening gap between the average salary and the cost of homes, which threatens the long-term sustainability of our city. We are also concerned that as more of our members must move farther from Austin, they lose their ability to vote and choose the leaders and policies that accurately reflect their values.

We are essential workers in this community. Like Austin's nurses, teachers, EMS medics, public servants, and small business owners, we are critical to building and maintaining this booming City, and we deserve the chance to live and thrive here as homeowners.

We urge you to give this initiative your full support and ensure its successful implementation to make Austin a city for everyone.

Sincerely,

Chap Thornton, President  
Ben Brenneman, Vice President  
Jeremy Hendricks, Treasurer  
Riley Drake, Secretary



200 E 30th St.  
Austin, TX 78705  
Ph: (512) 479-0388  
[www.EnvironmentTexas.org](http://www.EnvironmentTexas.org)

October 24, 2023

The Honorable Leslie Pool  
Austin City Council  
301 W 2nd St.  
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Council Member Pool,

I write in enthusiastic support for your HOME Initiative.

Austin is one of America's fastest-growing cities. This growth has brought dynamism to the city, but has also created environmental problems. Because much of Austin's growth has taken place at the urban fringe, the addition of new residents and businesses has caused persistent and worsening problems with traffic congestion, air pollution and water quality, as more undeveloped land is converted into new housing development.

Looking to the future, Austin has a choice. We can continue to sprawl farther and farther outward or we can find ways to accommodate people and businesses within the city's existing neighborhoods.

Focusing new growth in compact, walkable neighborhoods can address many of Austin's growing pains. Done right, compact development can benefit the environment and provide access to types of housing - such as housing in the "missing middle" between high-rises and single-family homes - that can meet Austin's dire housing needs. In fact, this exact approach was recommended in the 2012 Imagine Austin Comprehensive plan and has been consistently reaffirmed by City Council since.

Furthermore, as documented by our 2017 report "Growing Greener,"<sup>1</sup> which reviewed the existing literature produced by academic and government researchers on the environmental effects of different urban densities - compact

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<sup>1</sup> "Growing Greener: The Environmental Benefits of a Compact and Connected Austin"  
Environment Texas Research and Policy Center, October 2017  
<https://environmentamerica.org/texas/center/resources/growing-greener-2/>





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development can deliver tangible benefits for the environment – reducing energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, curbing the flow of polluted runoff into streams and lakes, and protecting natural areas and agricultural lands.

With strong policies to mitigate the local impacts of greater density, such as the city's new green infrastructure requirements and the proposed "Functional Green" program, Austin can develop in a way that will bring lasting environmental benefits. Thank you again for your work on this initiative and your ongoing leadership tackling Austin's environmental needs.

Sincerely,

Luke Metzger  
Executive Director, Environment Texas

**Don Baylor, Jr., Treasurer**  
Lafayette Square Holding  
Company, LLC

**Emily Chenevert**  
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**Catharine Echols**  
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Austin

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Austin

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Austin Women in Housing

Executive Director  
**Nora Linares-Moeller**



**HousingWorks**  
AUSTIN

October 24, 2023

Dear Mayor Watson, Austin City Council Members, and Austin Planning Commission Members:

HousingWorks Austin supports adoption of the initial set of proposed amendments to the land development code to implement the Home Options for Middle-income Empowerment (HOME) initiative and the removal of dwelling unit occupancy limits in the land development code that are currently under consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council.

HousingWorks believes the intent of proposed amendments would allow for the development of a greater diversity of housing types and living arrangements than currently allowed in single-family zoning districts, which would increase access to attainable housing opportunities for households at a range of income levels, especially for first-time home buyers and seniors wishing to remain in their communities, and increase housing opportunities in high opportunity areas.

We further recommend that the Council consider providing direction to City Staff to increase access to programs that ensure low and moderate income homeowners are able to avail themselves of increased development potential of single-family lots and are protected from predatory real estate activities. Such programs might include financial counseling, access to capital, legal and technical assistance, and ensuring clear titles are held by property owners.

We thank the City Council for their leadership on these issues and hope our recommendations can help improve the efficacy of the proposed amendments. If you have any questions, please email me at [nora@housingworksaustin.org](mailto:nora@housingworksaustin.org) and/or John-Michael Cortez, Advocacy Committee Chair, HousingWorks Board of Directors at [jmvcortez@gmail.com](mailto:jmvcortez@gmail.com).

Best Regards,

Nora Linares-Moeller  
Executive Director



Dear Mayor & Austin City Council Members,

On behalf of the Laborers' International Union of North America, Southwest Laborers District Council, and Local 1095, I am writing to express our official endorsement of the HOME Act that will help create more housing opportunities for our members. LiUNA's mission to support our members is fully aligned with the Council's efforts to create more housing we can afford, and options to live in the city we're proud to build and maintain.

Construction workers are essential workers to the future of Austin and Central Texas, but sadly our members are unable to afford to live in the places they work. This is making it more and more difficult to find the skilled workers needed to keep our building boom going, so we understand the urgent need to address the shortage of affordable housing for these workers. Home is an important step in ensuring our ability to attract a robust workforce to keep building on our successes.

Your efforts with the recent Mobility and Infrastructure Summit that focused on supporting and training a larger workforce for those big projects is an important piece of a larger picture that must include more attainable housing for those workers. We are all aware that federal dollars are at stake as part of the Infrastructure Bill and HUD's PRO Housing grant programs, both of which help fund Austin's future and support the people who construct it.

HOME takes a crucial first step to making homeownership more accessible, and reversing the rising cost of housing that prices our members out of Austin's housing market. We are alarmed by the widening gap between the average salary and the cost of homes, which threatens the long-term sustainability of our city. We are also concerned that as more of our members must move farther from Austin, they lose their ability to vote and choose the leaders and policies that accurately reflect their values.

We build this city and are vital members of this community. Like Austin's nurses, teachers, EMS medics, public servants, and small business owners, we deserve the chance to thrive and be part of this community as neighbors and homeowners.

We urge you to give this initiative your full support and ensure its successful implementation to make Austin a city for everyone.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Hendricks  
Assistant Business Manager  
Southwest Laborers District Council – LIUNA



PO BOX 171  
AUSTIN, TX 78767  
FARMANDCITY.ORG

713-244-4746

OCTOBER 24, 2023

MAYOR KIRK WATSON AND AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL  
301 W 2ND ST.  
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701

Dear Mayor Watson and Austin City Council Members,

Thank you for your consideration of supporting the HOME initiative that will be discussed on Thursday, and for all that you do to remove the burdensome limits to the amount of people allowed to live low-carbon, healthy, affordable lifestyles in the City of Austin.

We strongly support this initiative and urge you not to water it down in ways that will keep people from finding affordable housing options in this City.

Farm&City is dedicated to high quality urban and rural human habitat in Texas in perpetuity. We are a climate change organization that focuses on changing Texas public policies so that the millions of people who want to live low-carbon lifestyles in Texas are allowed to walk to the store, ride public transit to school, and not have to drive so much.

Unfortunately policies at the City of Austin have contributed negatively to our housing crisis – along with county, metropolitan, and state policies – forcing most people to live expensive car dependent lifestyles. The City's continued use of exclusionary zoning limits the amount of people allowed to live in the City to current population plus about 25% of regional growth.

City policy is diminishing the City's share of the region's population, abrogating the City's responsibility to provide for the growing human species on our planet in a more responsible, climate-aware manner, and significantly contributing to the paving over of the hill country. As shown by City of Austin Watershed Department analysis during the CodeNEXT process and the attached EPA report, land use reforms of this type will significantly reduce the future total impervious surface in our region, while actually slightly decreasing the total inside the City, even while allowing significantly more people to live in the City.

The climate costs of exclusionary zoning are profound. Not letting more people live in existing neighborhoods with existing underutilized infrastructure is an extraordinarily unwise choice at this time in history, with what we know very well about climate science and the impacts of housing and transportation policies. The City of Austin should not engage in an anti-science

Farm&City is dedicated to high quality urban and rural human habitat in Texas in perpetuity.



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position opposed to the overwhelming consensus of environmental groups and policy makers, including the position of the Federal Government and President Biden, urging the City of Austin to abandon exclusionary zoning and replace it with equitable growth strategies. As shown in our second attached report, those living in dense areas in our region are able to live their lives without emitting as much carbon as their neighbors who live in car dependent places. We should remove city limits on the amount of people allowed to not drive so much.

In spite of persistent mis-perceptions – significantly informed by elite projections and a focus on home sale prices – the more dense parts of the Austin region are the most affordable parts of the region, both in terms of housing and transportation costs, as documented in our attached report. Limiting the number of people allowed to live in the City drives up housing and transportation costs for people living in the City and those living in the rest of the region. Displacement is primarily caused by zoning rules that drive housing costs up and accelerate the competition for the artificially limited number of homes remaining in the City.

Our region is growing from 2 to 4 million people with a majority of the additional people expected to be people of color. The Austin City Council should seek to allow as many of those additional people as possible to live within the City in walkable transit-oriented places where low-carbon lifestyles are possible.

The HOME initiative is an important element of a responsible climate and equitable growth policy. While every homeowner can choose to keep their home exactly as they want, the City itself should not enforce broad dictates banning affordable housing types from any neighborhood. As stressed in the UT Uprooted report, allowing low-income homeowners to better utilize their lot, to share their space with other people, is an essential strategy to keep communities connected and preserve the most important character of our City, the people who live here today and their welcoming nature as our human population grows across the planet. Let's not be on the side of exclusion anymore, here in Austin, Texas.

Thank you for all that you do for the people of the City of Austin – past, present, and future – and for your consideration of voting in favor of the HOME initiative.

Sincerely,

Jay Blazek Crossley  
Executive Director



Nov 6th, 2023

**Austin City Council**  
301 W. 2nd St.  
Austin, TX, 78701

Dear Mayor & Council,

We are writing on behalf of the Austin LGBT Chamber of Commerce to express our wholehearted support for the HOME initiative proposed by the Austin City Council. We commend the Council's commitment to addressing the critical issue of housing accessibility, particularly for middle-income earners. This initiative aligns with the chamber's core values of fostering sustainable economic development and creating vibrant communities.

The HOME initiative's emphasis on creating more housing options for middle-income earners is a crucial step toward building a more inclusive and resilient city. By expanding the range of affordable housing choices, we can ensure that the workforce, a vital component of our community, has access to suitable homes. This not only enhances the overall quality of life for residents but also contributes to the economic prosperity of the region.

Furthermore, the provision allowing homeowners to house family members or caregivers on their property or earn passive income is a commendable aspect of the initiative. This not only promotes multigenerational living but also offers a practical solution to support families in times of need. The initiative's recognition of the evolving dynamics of modern households reflects a forward-thinking approach to urban planning.

The commitment to increasing housing supply is essential for addressing the current housing shortage. By doing so, the City Council will not only meet the immediate needs of its residents but also lay the groundwork for sustained growth and development. A diverse housing supply contributes to the creation of resilient communities that can adapt to changing demographic and economic trends.

We appreciate the initiative's alignment with Imagine Austin's goals, especially in creating walkable neighborhoods with a variety of housing types. This approach fosters a sense of community, encourages local economic activity, and promotes healthier, more sustainable lifestyles. By supporting Project Connect transit investment, the City Council is taking a comprehensive approach to urban planning that integrates housing with efficient transportation solutions.

Moreover, the HOME initiative's responsiveness to climate change is commendable. By reducing transportation emissions, slowing suburban sprawl, and incentivizing smaller, more energy-efficient homes, the Council is actively contributing to environmental sustainability. The Austin LGBT Chamber of Commerce recognizes the importance of environmentally conscious



initiatives, and we believe that the HOME initiative sets a positive example for other cities to follow.

In conclusion, the Austin LGBT Chamber of Commerce wholeheartedly supports the Austin City Council's HOME initiative. We believe that this initiative not only addresses the immediate housing needs of the community but also lays the foundation for a more sustainable and inclusive future. We applaud the Council's dedication to creating a city that is both economically vibrant and environmentally responsible.

Thank you for your time and commitment to the well-being of the Austin community.

**Regards,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tina Cannon".

**Tina Cannon, CEO Austin LGBT Chamber of Commerce**

Cc: Chamber Board of Directors



OUR PATIENTS. OUR UNION. OUR VOICE.



**National  
Nurses  
United**

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EL PASO  
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El Paso TX 79901  
*phone:* 915-779-2661  
*fax:* 915-779-2709

October 7, 2021

Austin City Council Members,

The National Nurses United (NNU) fully supports the HOME Act to create more housing opportunities. Our mission to support Austin nurses is fully aligned with the Council's efforts to create more housing our workers can afford, and options to live in the city we serve.

More nurses are needed for this growing city, especially with the staffing challenges faced by the existing health care providers and with new hospitals and medical facilities coming online. There is an urgent need to create more housing options to attract and retain nurses in Austin, and we hope the HOME initiative will help.

After a 12-hour shift, many of our members commute over an hour to get home; long commutes are not only unsafe after working such long hours but add more transportation costs and take away time with family. These realities drive our nurses to look for jobs outside of Austin, hurting recruitment and retention of essential medical personnel for all of Austin's medical facilities.

HOME takes a crucial first step to making homeownership more accessible, and reversing the rising cost of housing that prices our members out of Austin's housing market. We are alarmed by the widening gap between the average salary and the cost of homeownership and rent, which threatens the long-term sustainability of our city. We are also concerned that our members who work in Austin, but don't live in Austin, are no longer able to vote on issues or leaders who represent their values in the community they serve.

We are vital members of this community. Nurses deserve the chance to thrive and be part of Austin as neighbors.

We urge you to give this initiative your full support and ensure its successful implementation to make Austin a city for everyone.

Sincerely,  
Celeste Arredondo-Peterson  
National Nurses United - Texas