

## Website language for candidates

### **Support for all Campaign for Housing and Civic Engagement Priorities**

I will support policies that ensure that all Virginians have access to safe and stable homes and any additional resources needed that will enable them to thrive in the community.

This includes:

- Increasing funding for the Virginia Housing Trust Fund, a flexible loan and grant resource that addresses a range of local housing needs from homelessness to homeownership
- Promoting home energy efficiency programs that reduce monthly utility costs and help keep housing costs sustainable
- Providing access to permanent and supportive homes for individuals with mental health and disability needs.

### **Sample Housing Platform Language**

*(Tailor to your own district, incorporating any of the below statements and data from the district fact sheet we provided.)*

The availability and affordability of housing is an important issue affecting the lives of Virginians across the state and in my district. Rents across Virginia have risen faster than incomes in recent years, meaning more families struggle to keep up with the cost of housing while covering other living expenses. Many can only find homes in their budget that are long distances from where they work, straining Virginia's roads and highways. Between 2000 and 2015, the average rent in Virginia rose 34% faster than median household incomes. In my district, which covers \_\_\_\_\_ county(s), the median rent for a two bedroom apartment has risen \_\_\_\_\_% while incomes have grown \_\_\_\_\_. In many communities, the salary of a full time public servant like a police officer or firefighter is not high enough to afford housing in the community they live. And, nowhere in Virginia can a worker making minimum wage afford the average rental working a single full time job. Virginia can and should do more to ensure that its communities have a range of housing options available to all of its citizens that allows them to build savings, pursue educational opportunities, and thrive.

### ***Statements incorporating housing into other platform topics:***

*(Mix and match/ add to your existing platform language)*

#### **Economic Development/Transportation-**

- When workers can live where they work, economies thrive.
- When companies consider relocating to Virginia, they consider the availability of housing that would be affordable for their employees.
- Many of our businesses, such as restaurants and hotels, are dependent on lower wage service workers. Access to stable and permanent homes can help these employees live closer to reliable transit and job centers.

- Safe and stable home options that fit everyone's budget can help low-wage earners live closer to reliable transit and job centers, which in turn decreases commuting costs, cuts down on traffic congestion and improves quality of life.

### **Healthcare-**

- The vast majority of the estimated 6,000 Virginians experiencing homelessness struggle with disabling chronic medical or behavioral health conditions. "Housing first" models like permanent supportive housing are a proven solution to addressing homelessness while saving public resources.
- Access to quality and affordable living means other basic needs, such as healthcare, can be met.
- Housing is healthcare. When safe and stable homes are available and accessible, mental and physical wellbeing can be maintained.

### **Education-**

- Children whose families live in quality homes that meet their budget are less likely to move frequently, resulting in stability in school enrollment and higher test scores.
- Many families base their home choices on the ranking of the school and teacher-student ratio. Having housing options that meet the various budget needs of the workers in the community helps to ensure that quality teachers, for example, can live in the communities where they work.

### **Seniors-**

- Housing that meets the financial and accessibility needs of an aging population can help seniors on limited incomes maintain their roots in a community.
- Many seniors want to age in place but lack the resources needed to make their homes safe and accessible. It is important that resources exist to ensure that seniors are able to make the necessary modifications for them to remain in their homes.

### **Young Virginians-**

- Many young Virginians are finding when they return from college or the military that they cannot afford to live in the communities where they grew up. We need to be sure that an adequate supply of affordable housing exists in our communities.

### **Veterans-**

- In 2015, Virginia became the first state in the U.S. to create a self-sustaining system that makes homelessness among veterans rare, brief, and non-recurring. Continued support for permanent supportive housing will help ensure that no one who has served this country goes to sleep at night without a roof over their heads. Virginia needs to continue building these systems to serve other at risk populations so Virginia can become the first state to end homelessness for all its citizens.