HOUSING AS A PLATFORM PRIORITY

Sample Housing Platform Language:

For Virginia Congressional Candidates and Incumbents

Dear Candidate/Incumbent:

We hope you'll consider making housing affordability one of your platform priorities. A home is a basic human need that is essential for individuals and families to thrive. As outlined in the below sample language, housing is connected to many platform priorities. Jobs, health, education, and economic development are all dependent on access to quality and stable homes.

We encourage you to use our sample platform language to guide the creation of a housing platform. You may use our exact language or tailor it how you see fit. We've provided three sample platforms: language that aligns with CHACE's policy goals; language that outlines the need in Virginia; and statements that connect housing to other platform issues.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The CHACE team

Sample Housing Platform Language: #1

Platform Statement Supporting All CHACE 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:

- Ensuring individuals experiencing homelessness remain safe and healthy during the pandemic

- Advocating for fixes to the 4% LIHTC credit and increased funding for LIHTC

- Supporting increased and reliable federal assistance for renters and homeowners, particularly lower income households facing housing instability and communities of color

Sample Housing Platform Language: #2

Platform Statement Outlining the Need for Housing Affordability in the Commonwealth

The availability and affordability of housing is an important issue affecting the lives of Virginians across the state and in my district. Rents in many areas of Virginia have risen faster than incomes for over a decade.This means more families struggle to keep up with the cost of housing while covering other living expenses. Many can only find affordable homes that are long distances from where they work, increasing traffic on Virginia's roads and highways as well as adding commuting costs to tight family budgets. Per the 2015 American Community Survey and 2000 US Census data, the average rent in Virginia rose 34% faster than median household incomes between 2000 and 2015. 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.

Sample Housing Platform Language: #3

Platform Statements Connecting Housing Affordability to Other Policy Priorities

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

Housing & Economic Development

● 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.

Housing & Health

● 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.

Sample Housing Platform Language:

Housing & 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.

Housing & Older Adults

● 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.

Housing & 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.

Sample Housing Platform Language:

Housing & 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.

Notice!

Housing & Evictions

⬤ Data released in 2018 showed that Virginia's eviction rates are among the highest in the nation. When a family is forced to move as a result of eviction, they suffer a range of social and economic hardships. Among the most damaging are the educational setbacks that school age children experience. We need to find ways to reduce evictions and help families enjoy stable housing. Reduced evictions benefit property owners as well by helping them avoid lost income and higher expenses.