



May 2, 2022

The Honorable House Speaker Todd Huston and Members of the Legislative Council: Indiana faces a persistent shortage of affordable housing, fueled in part by a lack of enforcement of habitability standards, and the unclear jurisdiction of that enforcement between political subdivisions of state and local government. The undersigned are writing to respectfully ask that the Legislative Council select these topics for interim study, as included in 2022's SB 230 authored by Sen. Fady Qaddoura, Sen. Greg Walker, and Sen. Shelli Yoder; coauthored by Sen. Rodney Pol and Sen. Vaneta Becker; and sponsored by Rep. Edward Clere and Rep. Carey Hamilton.

Safe, stable housing is literally the foundation needed for positive health, education, and economic outcomes for Hoosier families and the communities they live in. On the other hand, poor habitability standards have been shown to result in health problems including lead poisoning, infectious diseases, and respiratory effects.

The lack of enforcement of habitability standards not only increases the incidence of poor health outcomes, but also drains financial resources from families while leaving Indiana's communities with a deficit of affordable and available housing. A [new report](#) by the Notre Dame Student Policy Network finds that Indiana is one of only five states without habitability standard enforcement policies that allow residents to withhold rent due to health and safety violations, or to repair the conditions and deduct the cost from their rent.

Stories of deplorable housing conditions affecting thousands of Hoosier families have recently made headlines from [Evansville](#) to [Indianapolis](#) to [South Bend](#), but this is truly a statewide issue that affects rural, urban, and suburban areas alike. The lack of habitability standard enforcement contributes to a gap of 135,033 affordable and available rental units for the lowest-income Hoosiers, according to a [new report](#) from Prosperity Indiana and NLIHC. Indiana now has the highest rate of severe cost burden in the Midwest for these extremely low income households, with 72 percent spending more than half of their income on housing.

For these reasons, the signatories of this letter, including members of the Hoosier Housing Needs Coalition and other concerned organizations and individuals, respectively request that the Legislative Council assign to an appropriate study committee the task of: studying the topic of the enforcement of habitability standards for residential rental units, including the issue of jurisdictional questions of enforcement between political subdivisions, state and local departments of health, and the attorney general.



Signed,

Members of the Hoosier Housing Needs Coalition:

Laura	Berry	Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Elizabeth	Brandt	Individual
Angela	Deutch	I & D Squared Consulting
Chelsea	Haring-Cozzi	Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention (CHIP)
Nicky	Harrison	United Way of Central Indiana
Tracey	Hutchings-Goetz	Hoosier Action
Mark	Lindenlaub	Thrive Alliance
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Kenda	Resler Friend	Individual
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Dee	Ross	The Ross Foundation
Alex	Slabosky	Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis
Wilbur	Sutton	Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis
Alicia	Vaughn	City Consultants & Research, LLC
Sarah	Williams	MCCOY (Marion County Commission on Youth, Inc.)

Other Organizational Signers:

Randy	Dennison	Lincoln Hills Development Corporation
Angela	Espada	Indiana Catholic Conference
Judith	Fox	Notre Dame Clinical Law Center, Economic Justice Project
Vonda	Horst	Church Community Services
Kim	Irwin	Indiana Public Health Association and Health By Design
Lisa	Laflin	West Indianapolis Development Corp
Marie	Morse	HomesteadCS
Chris	Myers	Area 10 Agency on Aging
Nancy	Ramsey	Family Promise of Hamilton County
Marcia	Roberts	St. Luke's Tenants Advocacy Group
Michelle	Shelburne	Sanctuary Indy, Inc.
Anne-Marie	Taylor	Indianapolis Neighborhood Resource Center
Susan Jo	Thomas	Covering Kids & Families of Indiana
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James	Wilson	Circle Up Indy, Ltd



Hoosier Housing Needs Coalition
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Other Individual Signers:

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Hoosier Housing Needs Coalition

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Hoosier Housing Needs Coalition

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