



Committee on Housing and Community Development
April 20, 2015 (**Speaker #1**)

My name is I am here today to speak on behalf of Good Faith Communities Coalition to voice our support for the proposed \$1 million new investment in the Housing Production Trust Fund.

Good Faith was founded five years ago as a voice of District faith congregations concerned about our neighbors who are poor and marginalized. In 2015 close to 45 congregations of all denominations signed a Covenant committing themselves "to actively support public efforts and programs to provide temporary and permanent affordable housing for all in need." The \$1 million new investment in the Trust Fund which will produce 1100 units of housing for low-income residents is the kind of program that we and community can and must support.

The human cost of homelessness that the city is now experiencing can be clearly seen in statistics and on the street. I will address the statistics; the second Good Faith speaker today will address the human cost.

The bottom 20% of renters have seen their rents rise 14% in the last 11 years while their income has remained unchanged. The next to lowest 20% have experienced a 35% increase in rent, also with virtually no increase in income.

In 2002 there were 58,000 rental units with rent and utilities under \$800 per month. In 2012 the rental stock in this category fell to 33,000, for a loss of close to 50%. The DC Fiscal Policy Institute concludes that "all of the low-cost housing [remaining] in DC results from government subsidies and that low-cost private rental housing has virtually disappeared."

These trends will not reverse on their own. The community must invest in new affordable units and preservation and renovation of existing units. 1100 new units from \$1M may seem like a small return on investment. However, it is the cost of doing business in an expensive city. The proposed investment needs to be followed by a long term commitment to replace housing that has disappeared.

And yes, a successful program to build affordable housing and manage homelessness will require more money, a lot more money. We will never reach a point where we as a community can check the box, "finished," mission accomplished. **No more poor!**

As faith communities we honor and embrace all people in our community as children of God. We are hopeful people. We feel that everyone deserves a home. It is a human right. To make this happen, **we can and must invest in affordable housing this year and into the future.**

Thank you for listening; we look forward to your leadership in making affordable housing a PRIORITY.

Note: Statistics from *Going, Going, Gone: DC's Vanishing Affordable Housing*. DCFPI, 2015.