



Committee on Housing and Community Development  
April 20, 2015 (**Speaker #2**)

My name is ..... I am here today to speak on behalf of Good Faith Communities Coalition. As our first speaker indicated, Good Faith is a voice of District faith congregations concerned about our neighbors who are poor and marginalized. Good Faith actively supports public efforts and programs to provide temporary and permanent affordable housing for all in need. We wholeheartedly support the proposed \$100 million investment in the Housing Production Trust Fund.

The human cost of homelessness and housing insecurity that the city is now experiencing is evident in low income households throughout the city. These households have felt the greatest impact from the almost 50% loss of rental units over the past 11 years. Among DC's lowest income residents 64% devote half or more of their income to housing. Anything beyond 30% of income for housing is considered a moderate to severe burden. 64% is a very severe burden and virtually not sustainable over time.

Affordable and sustainable housing is a critical foundation that stabilizes families and communities. Low-income households experiencing extreme rent burdens have little money to spend on other necessities such as transportation, food and healthcare. Jobs are more difficult to find and to get to on a regular basis. Overall health issues, both mental and physical, are more frequently left untreated. The effect of housing instability on school performance is well documented.

For individuals who are homeless the narrative might be different, but the outcome of long-term instability is the same. Frequent moves from shelter to the street with unsafe and unhealthy conditions lead to long term disability and estrangement from the larger community.

These trends will not reverse on their own. The community must invest in new affordable units and preservation and renovation of existing units. And yes, a successful program to build and sustain affordable housing on the scale needed will require more money. 1100 new units does not even begin to address the challenge.

As faith communities we honor and embrace all people in our community:

- The family sleeping in a car,
- the family evicted with their belongings on the curb,
- the child at school whose only home they have known is a shelter,
- the man hunched in a doorway whose life story does not always track to reality.

These are all our neighbors, our community, children of God. They all deserve 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.