Home Stability Support Talking Points

Home Stability Support (HSS) is a statewide rent subsidy proposal pending in Albany that would bridge the difference between inadequate housing allowances for those receiving public assistance, and actual rents for those families and individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. More than 100 faith leaders across the state, including the Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing, the NYS Council of Churches, and the NYS Catholic Conference, have expressed their support for this proposal to Governor Cuomo. Communities of faith are joining together this weekend to express in unison their belief that it is time to “Say Yes to HSS” by sharing prayers, sermons, and activism in support of HSS.

1. **HSS would help 80,000 households avoid or escape homelessness:** Homeless New Yorkers living in shelters, on the streets, or doubled-up would be eligible for HSS if they receive public assistance. HSS would also support thousands of public assistance households fleeing domestic violence or facing a loss of housing due to eviction or hazardous conditions.

2. **There are more than 150,000 homeless children in New York State:** HSS would help their families transition out of homelessness, and reduce the number of children experiencing the trauma of homelessness in New York State.

3. **23,000 more New Yorkers become homeless each year than escape it:** Over 250,000 New Yorkers were homeless in the 2018-2019 school year, including more than 150,000 children. Over 80,000 households in the state are on the brink of homelessness.

4. **HSS would help households in every county across the state:** Every single county in New York State has families and individuals who are homeless and/or at serious risk of becoming homeless who would benefit from Home Stability Support.

5. **HSS would keep people in their homes while saving local taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars:** HSS would save money by reducing the cost of shelters and other homeless services, and by preventing future evictions and loss of housing for other reasons.

6. **HSS has bipartisan support across New York State:** In addition to bipartisan sponsors in the New York State Assembly (129 sponsors) and Senate (37 sponsors), HSS has received support from municipal officials, Congressional representatives, NYC Council Members and Community Boards, more than 100 faith leaders, and more than 100 advocacy groups.

7. **HSS would have an immediate impact on New York State’s homelessness crisis:** A key benefit of HSS is that it can be implemented quickly and, therefore, would have a dramatic impact on the number of individuals and families sleeping in costly shelters in the near term.

8. **Rent subsidies work:** Research has shown that long-term housing subsidies are the most effective intervention in helping homeless children and their parents maintain housing stability and improve overall well-being. Permanent housing gives people the foundation they need to thrive.

9. **Current housing allowances for those receiving public assistance are entirely inadequate:** The public assistance shelter allowance has failed to keep up with the rising cost of housing, rendering it virtually useless for people trying to leave shelters. For a family of three with children, the average allowance is about $300 per month statewide, and it is just $400 per month in New York City – far below the cost of rental housing.

10. **Homelessness in New York has become a vicious cycle:** State policies must be reformed to address the scale of the crisis and reduce the fiscal burden on municipal governments and local taxpayers.