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Charitable # 1191-92763-RR0001

To the candidates of Davenport (Ward 9) Riding:

Alejandra Bravo, Simon Fogel, Grant Gonzales, Mosea Houghron, Shaker Jamal,

Steven Leca, Jacob Maydansky, Lazare Shorter, Allie Spencer

Dear Candidates,

Our communities urgently need transformative action. **We are calling on you to use your power as a city council candidate to advocate for vacancy control to your provincial counterparts.**

As organizations providing front-line programming and services, we understand that policy changes can lead to a more equitable Toronto. Our efforts to meet the immediate needs of people experiencing poverty, food insecurity, and housing unaffordability have been critical and impactful. However, systemic wellbeing requires public policy that meaningfully addresses the issues Torontonians are facing.

We are calling on you to support vacancy control measures in Toronto. As illustrated most recently by the [Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust](#), vacancy decontrol breeds homelessness and exposes the most vulnerable to systemic poverty, displacement, and ongoing precarity.

Costs for everyday essentials have been skyrocketing. Many of our community members already spend more than half their income on housing, especially those who survive on social benefits like Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program.

Without vacancy control, Toronto landlords are incentivized to force long-term tenants out to raise rents to “market rate”, thus displacing our vulnerable neighbours and destabilizing our communities. The absence of vacancy control results in the removal of truly affordable living options in Toronto – it makes our city less liveable.

In a recent report, The Stop found that 67% of our service users are on social assistance, 52% of those depend on ODSP, and 62% of our service users spend more than half their income on housing. This leaves little money to allocate to essentials such as food and medicine, or to build up meaningful savings.

Systemic poverty is a policy choice, not an inevitability. By advocating for vacancy control at a provincial level, you are choosing to champion two critical issues in our city: housing affordability and a liveable city. City of Toronto counsellors must understand that progressive policy initiatives are needed to end reliance on community support programming. Community support programs ought to be supplemental and additive, not essential to survival in the city. In the absence of forward-looking vacancy control measures, Torontonians will continue to struggle despite our best efforts to support stable and dignified living conditions in our city.

Calling for vacancy control is an immediate action you can take to support Torontonians.

In partnership,

The Stop and The Neighbourhood Land Trust