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October 29, 2018

Mr. Stanley Brezenoff
Interim Chair & CEO
New York City Housing Authority
250 Broadway, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mr. Brezenoff:

Solving the ongoing crises facing the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)—heat, mold, vermin and other issues—requires your agency to engage in more than just platitudes. The leadership of our city's public housing must have hands-on experience with the issues tenants face at all times of the day.

To that end, I am calling on each non-resident member of your agency's board of directors to spend one full week living in a NYCHA apartment. The apartment should be chosen by the residents of NYCHA and, going forward, such a stay should be a requirement for all new non-resident board members.

I spent the first few years of my life as a young child living in a NYCHA apartment, having grown up in the E. Roberts Moore Houses in Mott Haven. As a teenager, I spent a great deal of my time in the former Bronxdale Houses in Soundview, which are now known as the Justice Sonia Sotomayor Houses. During my more than two decades as an elected official, I have spent countless hours working with public housing tenants to address their concerns and engage in direct action to make their homes safer, cleaner and better. I know exactly what it means to live in a NYCHA apartment.

However, our cries for fair treatment of the city's more than 400,000 public housing tenants often seem to fall on deaf ears. Perhaps if the leadership of NYCHA was required to spend one week living in a public housing development and saw the issues faced by tenants as part of an extended, more intimate, first-hand experience they might not be so quick to dismiss such concerns or simply cite perpetual funding issues as a reason for inaction.

It is my hope that you can implement this policy in time for your non-resident board members to experience an upcoming winter week in a NYCHA apartment. If this winter is anything like last, I am sure this experience will be enlightening to your membership.

Please feel free to contact me directly if you wish to discuss this matter at greater length.

Sincerely,

Ruben Diaz Jr.