



Summit Terrace Neighborhood Association

1228 Bailey Street • Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17103
(717) 232-9456

David S. Wise
President, Executive Director
1201 Walnut Street
Harrisburg, PA 17103

DECEMBER 16, 1997

THANK YOU MR CHAIRMAN FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR BEFORE
YOUR COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT OF THE BILLS THAT ARE PENDING ON
THE ISSUE OF DILAPIDATED HOUSING IN OUR INNER-CITY POOR NEIGH-
BORHOODS.

THERE IS NO DENYING THE FACT THAT MOST OF OUR INNER-CITY NEIGH-
BORHOODS ARE PLAGUED WITH BLIGHTED DILAPIDATED PROPERTIES.
PEOPLE OF ALL ECONOMIC LEVELS ARE LEAVING THESE NEIGHBORHOODS.
THE BRAKE-DOWN IN PUBLIC SAFETY AND CRIMINAL ACTIVITY HAS BE-
COME THE PRIMARY OCCUPATION THEREBY CREATING AN EROSION OF THE
TAX BASE.

LET ME MAKE IT CLEAR AT THE OUTSET THAT I AM NOT HERE BLAMING
THE RENTAL HOUSING INDUSTRY FOR ALL OF THESE PROBLEMS. MY ORGAN-
IZATION THE SUMMIT TERRACE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION HAS REACHED
OUT TO THE CAPITAL AREA RENTAL PROPERTY OWNERS TO JOIN IN CO-
LLABORATION WITH US AND OTHER GROUPS TO IMPROVE THE HOUSING CON-
DITIONS IN THESE NEIGHBORHOODS BY CREATING A ARCHITECTURAL
CONSERVATION OVERLY DISTRICT. THIS INITIATIVE CAN BE A WIN WIN
FOR ALL PARTIES.

Summit Terrace Neighborhood Assn.
December 16, 1997
Page 2

IF WE WANT RESIDENTS TO HAVE PRIDE IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS WE NEED TO MAKE THEM LIVEABLE. IT IS OFTEN SAID THAT HOME-OWNERSHIP IS THE GLUE THAT HOLDS NEIGHBORHOODS TOGETTER. THAT IS ALSO OUR BELIEF. THE PROBLEM WITH RENTERS IS THAT MOST ARE SHORT TERM LEASE HOLDERS WHO DO NOT HAVE THE STAKE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD AS LONG TERM LEASE HOLDERS.

THE RENTAL PROPERTY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION HAVE COMPLAINED ABOUT TOO MUCH GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION YET THEY HAVE FAILED TO RECONIZE AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT THERE ARE SLUM LANDLORDS WHO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE LAW AS IT IS CURRENTLY WRITTEN AND CONTINUE TO POLUTE OUR NEIGHBORHOODS WITH BLIGHTED PROPERTIES THEREBY TARNISING THE IMAGE OF THEIR INDUSTRY. AS LONG AS THIS BUSINESS PRACTICE IS ALLOWED TO CONTINUE WITHOUT THE INDUSTRY WILLING TO TAKE ACTION TO CONTROL THE ACTION OF THE SLUM LANDLORDS THERE WILL BE MORE GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION. IT IS THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT TO STAND IN THE WELL TO PROTECT THE POOR AND POWERLESS AGAINST THE POWERFUL. SLUM LANDLORDS MUST BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR ACTION TO THE SAME DEGREE OF THE LAW AS ANY OTHER PROPERTY OWNER.

Summit Terrace Neighborhood Assn.
December 16, 1997
Page 3

LET ME SAY IN CLOSING THAT WE HOPE THAT YOU TAKE A COMPREHEN-
SIVE APPROACH TO THIS PROBLEM BY CONSIDERING THIS BILL AS A
COMPANION BILL TO ALL THE OTHER BILLS PENDING ON THE ISSUE.
PASSAGE OF THESE BILLS WILL HELP TO CLOSE SOME OF THE LOOPHOLDS
IN THE LAW THAT ALLOW SLUM LANDLORDS TO CONTINUE TO POLUTE
THE NEIGHBORHOOD WITH DILAPIDATED PROPERTY AT TAXPAYERS EXPENSE.

AGAIN THANK YOU MR CHAIRMAN AND YOUR COMMITTEE FOR GIVING
US THIS OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY.