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Tom Hartnett
District No. 110 - Charleston County

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House of Representatives

State of South Carolina

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bipartisan Group of State Representatives Call for Immediate Investigation into Charleston County Housing and Redevelopment Authority’s Sale of Publicly Owned Single Family Homes

Charleston, SC — 08/20/2024 — State Representatives Mark Smith HD-99, Tom Hartnett HD-110, Joe Bustos HD-112, Joe Jefferson HD-102 and Gary Brewer HD-114. Are calling for an immediate and thorough investigation into the Charleston County Housing and Redevelopment Authority’s recent decision to sell off 30 homes. The sale of these homes has no buyer restrictions, and the listing agent is the former CEO of the Housing Authority. This raises serious concerns about the management, transparency, and long-term impact of this sale on the community.

The decision to sell these homes, many of which have been neglected and left vacant for years, comes at a time when the authority has been designated as "troubled" by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and has faced widespread criticism for its failure to maintain public housing, particularly at Joseph Floyd Manor. This sale, valued at over \$7 million, raises critical questions about the authority's commitment to its mission of providing affordable housing and whether this move is simply a short-term financial fix at the expense of the community's long-term needs. The following are questions directed to CEO Angela Childers, Board Chair Sandino Moses, and Former CEO / Listing Agent Karen Gorham.

1. **Why was a former CEO, with ties to past failures, chosen to manage this sale, and were there conflicts of interest in this decision?**
2. **Why were these homes allowed to sit vacant and deteriorate for years, and who will be held accountable for this negligence?**
3. **What guarantees are in place to ensure these properties will remain affordable?**
4. **What is the long-term strategy for maintaining or expanding affordable housing?**
5. **How can the authority justify this sale when it has been labeled 'troubled' by HUD and has failed to address squalid conditions at Joseph Floyd Manor?**
6. **How will the proceeds from these sales be used, and what safeguards are in place to prevent these funds from being mismanaged?**
7. **What steps will be taken to ensure this sale does not undermine the county’s investments in affordable housing?**
8. **How can the public trust an agency with such a poor track record to handle such a significant transaction effectively?**
9. **What will be done to restore public trust in the Charleston County Housing and Redevelopment Authority?**

These questions demand immediate answers. “The people of Charleston County deserve to know why public assets are being sold off and how this decision will impact their access to affordable housing. We will pursue these questions aggressively and will not rest until we have full transparency and accountability from the Charleston County Housing and Redevelopment Authority. We will use every tool available to our disposal to initiate a formal investigation into the matter, ensuring that the sale of these homes is conducted in the best interest of the community, with full public disclosure and oversight.

Best regards,

Rep. Mark Smith

Rep. Tom Hartnett

Rep. Gary Brewer

Rep. Joe Bustos

Rep. Joe Jefferson