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Sent: Monday, January 15, 2024 10:26 AM
To: McRae, Angela <Angela.McRae@hamilton.ca>
Subject: Written submission for Budget Meeting-January 17, 2024

Written Budget Delegation-January 17, 2024

Hello City Council and Staff,

My name is Christine Neale and I am the chair of the downtown chapter of ACORN and tenant in Ward 2.

My delegation today is in support of the city implementing a comprehensive suite of tenant protection policies. I commend the hard work of city staff on this important issue across 2023, and hope to see the needed funding added to the 2024 budget. I am delegating today specifically on the Safe Apartment Bylaw.

In a world where corporations get the last word on the quality of our living conditions, the people who lose are the tenants. Tenants are the ones who pay for “renter-friendly” band-aid repairs when there’s no maintenance worker to call.

Tenants are the ones who become unable to maintain social lives because they can’t in good conscience bring bedbugs to the party. Tenants are the ones who take hours, days, and weeks out of their lives trying to carve out a halfway livable home. I had an issue with bedbugs in my apartment in 2019 and as a result had to throw away furniture, blankets, rugs and clothes. I took my landlord to the LTB at my own expense and after two and a half years because of Covid I won damages. I still have an issue with ‘PTSD’ every time I have an itch and sleep with the light on in the bedroom, ‘just in case’. Hamilton tenants are in need of new tools to meet the challenge of contending with landlords who commit provincial offences and don’t care.

We will continue organizing and fighting for our rights, but we need an effective ally in our corner. Proactive annual inspections of rental buildings will go a long way towards making these corporations afraid of breaking the law again, and will hit them in their bottom line where it hurts most.

Media attention on these issues across 2023, has brought all eyes on Hamilton municipal leaders to pave the way for better affordable housing policy. We have the opportunity to do something truly groundbreaking for tenant protections in Ontario, and ACORN applauds the progress made so far; now let’s bring it home.

Thank you for your attention my delegation.