April 17, 2018

Assembly Member \_\_\_\_\_

New York State Assembly

Albany, NY 12248

Re: Affordable Independent Senior Housing Assistance Program

Dear Assembly Member \_\_\_\_\_,

On behalf of a coalition of organizations statewide concerned for New York’s senior population, I am writing to ask that you support [**A.10017-A (Cymbrowitz)**](http://nyassembly.gov/leg/?default_fld=&leg_video=&bn=A10017A&term=2017&Summary=Y&Actions=Y&Text=Y)**/**[**S.7866-A (Little)**](https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2017/S7866/amendment/a), legislation that would establish an Affordable Independent Senior Housing Assistance Program.

Older New Yorkers are the fastest growing demographic in our state and will comprise an estimated 46 million households statewide by 2030. But New York’s stock of affordable senior housing is woefully inadequate to meet this increasing demand. A recent survey of just a sample of senior housing developments in New York indicated that there are more than 100,000 older adults on waiting lists for senior housing, with many more not surveyed. Additionally, over 32% of seniors pay well over 50% of their income for rent or are forced to live in housing that is unsuitable to meet their needs.

The **Affordable Independent Senior Housing Assistance Program** would create a cost-effective model for seniors to age in place in either existing senior housing or new construction. Resident assistants would provide “light-touch” services such as maintaining relationships with community-based organizations, providing residents with information and referral lists for community services, arranging for educational and socialization programs, and establishing resident safety programs.

Importantly, this model of services would result in significant savings to the State’s Medicaid program by preventing or lowering costs of emergency room visits and keeping low-income seniors out of costlier levels of care, such as assisted living or nursing homes. A New York-based study by Selfhelp Community Services found lower costs per person per hospitalization - patients with a service coordinator had an average Medicaid payment of $1,778 versus $5,715 for the comparison group. Research has shown that resident assistance programs in senior housing promote emotional well-being and stronger social supports, higher resident awareness of services, and better linkages between residents and needed services.

**I urge you to support the healthy aging of New York’s seniors by co-sponsoring A.10017-A (Cymbrowitz)/ S.7866-A (Little).** We hope that the Assembly leadership will make this legislation a priority in the current legislative session.

Thank you for your work to ensure that elderly residents throughout the state may continue to live independently and safely in the homes and communities of their choice.

Sincerely,



