

Hon. Felix Rivera  
Member of the Assembly  
Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska

Dear Assembly Member Rivera,

Thank you for introducing an ordinance to create a Houseless Lived Experience Advisory Board. HRAC wholeheartedly endorses your proposal and urges its adoption by the Assembly.

Our Anchorage community of individuals and families without a house is a microcosm of our nation's social and economic failures as a society. Ever since our founding, HRAC has tried to bring our stories into the halls of the establishment where they might be heard by compassionate leaders with the will to change things for the better.

We have been, and continue to be, grateful for the support of the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness and the work of their many partners, but our community safety net is fragmented and starved for resources.

Where would we be without federal assistance during these COVID times? We would all be in illegal camps subject to raids by the police and vigilantes. That is no way to treat our fellow human beings who are already discouraged, traumatized, and in need of care. In some perverse way, we should be grateful that COVID opened many people's eyes to the plight of those among us who are houseless.

It has been a little less than a year since the Assembly formally adopted the *Anchored Home* Plan. More than 700 voices from the community were heard during the development of *Anchored Home*, but very few of those voices spoke of being houseless. Even so, HRAC endorsed the Plan because it represents a milestone that continues to give us all a set of mileposts to help gauge our progress.

A housed activist with more than a decade of participation in this struggle, recently noted that they had participated in many work sessions dealing with the issues of the houseless. They were unable to recall a time when someone with lived experience was included in the search for solutions.

It is time to incorporate the wisdom of individuals with lived experience into decisions that affect the futures of our people.

Thank you for bringing this opportunity to do better to the Assembly. We urge all members to vote "aye."

Respectfully submitted,

 Sil Mairal, HRAC Scribe

On behalf of the HRAC Steering Committee

