Yovanna

Hello, my name is Yovanna Jones and I am resident at Liberty Green and a member of the Louisville Tenants Union. Thank you all for coming out to hear us today. We want to start off by thanking Councilperson Jecorey Arthur for sponsoring this resolution to support this campaign.

After years of holding listening sessions with Louisville tenants, we launched this campaign in March 2022 to improve the quality of life for hundreds of Louisville tenants. We are calling on LMHA to cancel the contact of one of the most abusive property managers in the city, and take these properties under LMHA management and union maintenance staff.

Almost as soon as we launched this campaign, LMHA conceded to some of their demands and took over management of 185 scattered site units, previously managed by national corporation CT Group in June. When we go to those properties now, we see parking lots full of LMHA maintenance vehicles making repairs after years of neglect. At the H Temple Spears building, the Courier Journal reported that inspectors from the city's Department of Codes and Regulations visited the site nine times from July 2021 to February 2022, and their reports cite incessant water damage, walls in need of repair, leaks and faulty lights. In December, one inspector wrote, "A lot of the violations are still the same." In October 2021, The Courier Journal reported units in the Berrytown complex had become riddled with mold while under CT Group management. The residents in these buildings are finally getting much needed repairs.

Those of us in Liberty Green and Sheppard Square deserve the same. Although I have had problems with the CT Group for years, something real harmful happened in June 2022 when I tried to move from public housing to Section 8. Although I completed my application at the beginning of July 2022, CT Group put me through a series of gaslighting and goalpost moving, where they continually told me that my application was incomplete. After submitting a second time and making another trip to the rental office, my application was finally complete by the deadline on July 25th. However, on July 25th, the CT Group called at 3:41pm and asked, “are you coming to get these papers or not?” When I arrived at the Section 8 office, there was a sign on the door saying that paperwork would not be accepted after 4pm. I returned the next day and called the Recertification Specialist from LMHA who verified that all my paperwork was turned in on time.

After several more rounds of going back and forth, dropping off paperwork only to have them call me later and say that my application was not complete, I finally completed my paperwork and the Liberty Green staff apologized to me b/c they were doing jobs that they were not trained to do. The next problem was that I was not allowed to view my Section 8 unit or do a walk through because the CT Group did not have the keys and would not have them until August 1st. At this point, I decided to speak to the Regional Manager where I was directed to Kathy Strom. I told her how the staff had been rude and unprofessional during this entire process. When I explained my situation to her, she responded, “why not stay in Public Housing instead of using Section 8.” I was so offended that she said this. She had no right to inquire or offer suggestions about my housing. I then asked her how to file a complaint and she responded that she would

file it herself. The conversation continued to escalate until Kathy became very angry and said, “Ms Jones we are not going to transfer you.” That was the end of the conversation. I was literally standing at the Section 8 office in front of the staff when I had this conversation. So there are witnesses.

There is no reason any of that should have happened. All I did was attempt to move from public housing to the Section 8 program, that I already met the requirements for. The CT Group treats us like because we live in public housing, we don't have rights. But we do have rights. We have aspirations. I grew up in Smoketown and Phoenix Hill and I chose to stay because this is my home. I grew up in public housing, but my mother had a different plan for me. She sent me to traditional schools my entire life to help prepare me for college. I graduated from Louisville Male High School where I was in marching band, concert band, track team, and Future Educators of America. In May of this year I graduated with an Associates of Arts from Bluegrass Community Technical College in Lexington. It was a long commute but I finished the program. I am now a proud first generation college student and work at Johnson Traditional MIddle School.

As a single mother, it is hard enough to get out of public housing without having to endure the treatment that we experience by Kathy Strom and the Ct Group. The mistreatment, the harassment, the lack of maintenance. These issues affect our health, our safety and the lives of our children.