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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**RESIDENTS & ADVOCATES RELEASE NEW REPORT AT CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING
CALLING FOR MAINTENANCE AND EXPANSION OF PUBLIC HOUSING**

WASHINGTON- As Congress is poised to consider new legislation to drastically reform public housing, The Preservation, Enhancement, and Transformation of Rental Assistance Act of 2010 (PETRA), public housing residents and advocates released a new report calling for Congress and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to strengthen and expand public housing. The report, *We Call These Projects Home: Solving the Housing Crisis from the Ground Up*, was released by the Right To The City Alliance (RTTC), a national coalition of grassroots organizations, at a congressional briefing co-sponsored by Representative Maxine Waters (D-CA) and Representative Nydia M. Velázquez (D-NY).

At the briefing RTTC, with their allies National People's Action, presented the report, which represents voices of public housing residents across seven cities. The research included quantitative and qualitative data analysis from Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, New York City, Oakland, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C.

"The best thing about public housing is having a stable roof over your head. You can rely on it and you know the price won't go sky high," said Lorraine Knox, a member of Community Voices Heard and a public housing resident in New York City.

Unfortunately, however, public housing is rapidly becoming endangered due to decades of government disinvestment, demolition, and deregulation. The collective operating deficit for the Public Housing Authorities studied for this report is \$206 million. Furthermore, between 1995 and 2008, about 200,000 public housing units were demolished, leaving scores of people displaced from their homes.

"Millions of people are paying over half of their income for housing," said Alexa Kasdan, Director of Research and Policy at the Urban Justice Center and one of the primary researchers for this report. "There is a desperate need for low-income housing that is not being met by the private housing market."

"We found that Public housing is one of the only options for very low-income people to have secure, stable, and permanently affordable housing," said Anita Sinha, Senior Attorney from the Advancement Project and another primary researcher for the report.

"I know how badly people need public housing," said Emma Harris, a member of POWER in San Francisco and a public housing resident. "Yet, over 250,000 people are on the waitlists for public housing in the cities we studied. Our participants waited an average of six years to get into public housing. I was on a waitlist for 10 years. Congress must take immediate action to address this crisis by maintaining and expanding public housing."

The report asserts various recommendations for Congress and the Obama Administration, including, fully funding the public housing operating fund; passing the Together We Care Act (H.R. 4224), introduced by

Rep. Nydia Velazquez to create jobs for public housing residents; and expanding public housing by repealing the existing law that prohibits the new construction of public housing.

The group also commented on PETRA, HUD's new initiative, which would allocate \$350 million toward making public housing more like a project-based voucher system. RTTC cautioned that PETRA could expose public housing to the pitfalls of the private market and actually shrink the amount of public housing stock.

“At time when we need to build more public housing, PETRA brings up some real concerns. Rather than privatize public housing, Congress should focus on strengthening and expanding it,” said Teresa Harris, a public housing resident and member of Causa Justa in Oakland.

Read the full report *We Call These Projects Home* at: <http://tinyurl.com/wecall>

Right to the City (RTTC) is a national alliance of membership-based organizations and allies organizing to build a united response to gentrification and displacement in cities. RTTC is working to build a national urban movement for housing, education, health, racial justice, and democracy and includes more than forty member organizations and resource allies in seven states and more than a dozen local jurisdictions. RTTC organizations that participated in this report include: Community Voices Heard, Families United for Racial and Economic Equality, Friends and Residents of Arthur Capers and Carrollsburg, Good Old Lower East Side/Public Housing Residents of the Lower East Side, Cause Justa Oakland, Make the Road NY, Miami Workers Center, Mothers on the Move, Picture the Homeless, People Organized to Win Employment Rights, Survivors' Village. The following resource organization also assisted: Advancement Project, DataCenter and Urban Justice Center's Community Development Project.

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