

**Healthy Families ♦ Thriving Communities Collaborative Council**  
**1436 U Street NW, Suite 203**  
**Washington, DC 20009**  
**Phone: (202) 299-0900**

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**Testimony of Richard Flintrop**  
**Representing the Healthy Families ♦ Thriving Communities Collaborative Council**  
**before the**  
**District of Columbia Zoning Commission**  
**Concerning**  
**Case Number 04-33, Inclusionary Zoning**  
**August 1, 2005**

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Good evening. My name is Richard Flintrop, I am a 15 year resident of the District and reside at 123 Thomas Street NW in Ward 5. I am a policy analyst with the Healthy Families ♦ Thriving Communities Collaborative Council, and I am appearing before you today on behalf of The Collaborative Council, which is provides advocacy, training and support for the seven HFTC Collaboratives in the District. Our Council is comprised of three members representing each of the seven Collaboratives. In addition, four organizations participate in the Council as Associate Members, including the Center for the Study of Social Policy, the Consortium for Child Welfare, DC Action for Children, and the DC Children's Trust Fund. The seven Collaboratives have been providing a range of neighborhood based, family centered supportive services to families across the District since 1997 in partnership with the Child and Family Services Agency. In addition to our work with CFSA, the Collaboratives have become a major resource for the Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness, serving families and their children who enter their system of care with similar family supportive supports. Over the past three years, the Collaboratives have been providing the services to fathers as a partner in the DC Fatherhood Initiative under a contract with the Department of Human Services.

The Collaborative Council strongly encourages adoption of a mandatory inclusionary zoning policy as represented in the proposal submitted by the Campaign for Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning. I want to use my time before you today to stress the importance of moving as quickly as possible on this initiative, as every day the number of affordable housing units in DC is shrinking, affecting the ability of our most vulnerable families to find safe and affordable housing.

In fiscal year 2004, the seven Collaboratives, under contracts with CFSA, provided intensive

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case management to over 2,000 families with over 5,600 children. In addition, we served another 175 families through the Community Cares program, funded by the Community Partnership.

The single most difficult challenge we face in our effort to support these families is securing affordable housing. We succeed only because the Collaboratives each have at least one housing specialist on staff who works to identify available affordable housing and works with landlords to access this housing stock. In addition, we help the clients develop the skills they need to become responsible tenants. However, in every corner of the city, we are facing a rapid reduction in the number of affordable housing units. Landlords are opting to convert Section 8 units to market rate rentals. Federal policy is fueling the loss of project based subsidized housing. And, in a city where the market for high-end rental and condominium housing seems insatiable, there is little incentive for developers to utilize increasingly scarce land for low or moderate income housing.

Most of the clients we serve are long time residents of DC, and they want very much to raise their children in the neighborhoods they call home. However, unless the city moves quickly to adopt a comprehensive strategy to sustain existing affordable housing and to assure that new development includes opportunities for residents of all income levels, we will close the door on families such as those we serve. And in the long run, we will be a poorer community if that happens.

I also want to stress that this is an issue of personal importance to the staff members of the Collaboratives across the city. The Collaboratives employ over 140 individuals, and our service model incorporates a mix of professional and para-professional staff. The average salary for our family support workers is under \$35,000 a year. Most of these staff are DC natives and reside in the neighborhoods in which they work. For many, their current position is their first opportunity to enter the work force and begin to establish a financial future. However, these staff, even as they build a credit history and set aside money for home purchase, are facing a growing challenge when attempting to find affordable housing in the neighborhoods in which they grew up. These dedicated workers, and thousands like them in dozens of other non-profits across DC deserve the same opportunity to benefit from investment in homes that most of us are realizing.

We recognize that adoption of an inclusionary zoning policy is not a silver bullet. But it would be a big next step, and send a message that we see a future for the city that provides housing opportunities for families of all income levels. We urge you to act quickly and see that a MANDATORY IZ policy is established as soon as possible. Thank you.