

**Ms. Rosa Romero and Ms. Sandra Romero – Feb. 23 Testimony
Case No. 14-18A**

Rosa Romero and Sandra Elizabeth Romero, Latinx immigrants. Both are cancer survivors, and Rosa is currently undergoing treatment. Sandra has six children, all of whom live with her. They are both unable to work and receive government assistance. They are enrolled in a program through Brookland Manor that allows them to receive subsidized housing, despite the fact that their Section 8 housing hasn't been accepted in the last couple of years.

Things are good right now. They offered to let us live here, in an apartment that has 4 bedrooms. We don't know the cost of the apartment nor the name of the program through Brookland Manor that lets us live here. Right now we are paying \$180 a month.

It means a lot that we are able to live in this apartment. For the kids, it means that they aren't cooped up- they have space to run around and play. And the adults are not always here because we work. But altogether, when we go to sleep at night, the apartment fills up.

The issue is that with a family this large, we can't be moving from one apartment to the other. We have kids. And physically we can't! My daughter, Sandra, cannot move heavy things. Me either. I am limited and at most I can move four pounds at a time. Of course, we can try to find someone to move things for us but those things cost money, and where is that? How would we pay for that?

I am currently undergoing radiation and chemotherapy treatment. I'll be starting up again soon after having finished in October, because they've found something in my chest. It's the cancer. I've been unemployed since July 27th, 2016 as I deal with it.

Sandra, her daughter, interjects: There are many things that I am unable to do. I have to look for a job where I don't lift more than ten pounds at a time,

but all the jobs am I able to get require some sort of lifting. I've been without a job for a few years.

Rosa continues: Since Sandra arrived to this country she has not been able to work. She became very ill and then was struck with lymphoma. She has been surviving cancer for ten years. And her pregnancies have affected her greatly. She now wears a prosthesis and cannot walk straight. If you push her she will fall, so she must always be careful. The activities she does are very limited. The only thing she is able to do is care for her children, which is also hard work.

At the very least we are all here together, taking care of one another.

I don't know if I will be able to return to my job. I'm a housekeeper, and that work is heavy and difficult. I don't know when I'll be able to retire. The process itself is confusing- I cannot read nor write. My daughter can read and write a little bit. But what's going to happen if this redevelopment plan happens?

It took me seven months to find the last apartment for myself and the kids. Do you know what it cost me to find this one? I even had to go to court! Each morning I woke up at 8 in the morning to find someone who would help me find an apartment or help me fill out papers. I couldn't find a place for us to live! Sometimes I paid up to \$200 to have someone help me make a payment!

What we need is help. We need stability. I am satisfied with Brookland Manor because they gave me a helping hand with the apartment we live in right now. But I need them to continue helping me. Apparently 4-bedroom apartments cost up to \$2,300-\$2,400 a month. How am I ever going to pay that in the situation I am in?

We want to tell Brookland Manor that they allow us to remain and not displace us. If they come in to tell us that we can't live here anymore, life will become very difficult, especially for me. It will be difficult finding a new apartment- people don't want to rent out apartments to families with this many kids. They think we cannot pay!