



Monroe County Legislature

RACHEL BARNHART

Legislator – District 17

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To The Honorable
Monroe County Legislature
39 West Main Street
Rochester, NY 14614

Re: Memorializing Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature to Support the Housing Access Voucher Program (S72/A1704).

Honorable Legislators:

The City of Rochester and Monroe County are experiencing a growing housing crisis, with rising rates of homelessness and an increasing lack of affordable housing options. In recent years, Rochester has seen a troubling increase in the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness, with local shelters at capacity and more residents being forced into precarious housing situations. Meanwhile, the availability of affordable housing has not kept pace with demand, leading to housing instability for low-income residents, many of whom are at risk of displacement. Rochester continues to struggle with high rates of poverty, with a significant number of households spending more than a third of their income on housing costs.

New York State has a responsibility to ensure that all residents have access to safe, stable, and affordable housing, particularly as housing costs outstrip wages and social safety nets remain insufficient to meet the needs of vulnerable populations. The Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP) would provide essential assistance by functioning similarly to the federal Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) but with broader eligibility and greater flexibility. This would include coverage for individuals and families experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, including those who do not qualify for federal assistance.

HAVP would offer ongoing rental assistance to those with extremely low incomes, ensuring that recipients pay no more than 30% of their income toward rent. This approach would significantly reduce housing instability and prevent homelessness. Furthermore, investing in HAVP would not only improve housing security but also reduce costs associated with emergency shelters, healthcare, and other crisis interventions caused by homelessness.

Vouchers are an important tool to address housing affordability. Monroe County should join local governments across the state that are calling on New York State to fund and implement HAVP as a necessary tool to address the housing crisis.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the State Legislature and Governor to include full funding for the Housing Access Voucher Program in the state budget and to take immediate action to support individuals and families in need of stable housing.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rachel Barnhart". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end.

Rachel Barnhart
Legislator - District 17