



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

LENNY CURRY
MAYOR

CITY HALL SUITE 400
117 W. DUVAL STREET
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32202

October 6, 2015

The Honorable Marco Rubio
United States Senate
716 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Rubio:

While I have walked through the doors of my home for nearly 10 years, Friday evening's entry was unlike any other, as I could not shake the images of mold, deteriorating stairwells, and other conditions that a few hours earlier, residents of Eureka Gardens - a community in the city I'm elected to lead - showed me they face every day. I hope and pray that I never forget Ms. Dwan Wilson's dining room table, covered with medication that she tearfully explained that her young children must take due to breathing issues they now suffer since moving into their apartment. This experience is a defining moment in my 98 days of mayoral administration, as I have made multiple visits to this same community, prior to and following my election, to address high incidents of violence that plague them, when, in fact, their homes and dwellings may also pose a threat to their safety.

The local newspaper described my reaction to last week's home visits as "heartbreaking." They are correct. I do share great concern and compassion for the families living in these conditions; however, I am as equally outraged.

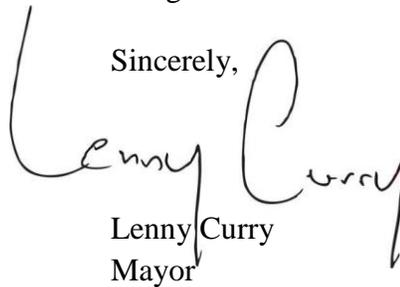
For the next several days, key members of my administration, as directed, are continuing to knock on doors throughout the 400-unit community to request permission from families to inspect their residences. Although the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development serves as the lead agency, we take very seriously our responsibility for contributing to public safety and will enact enforcement procedures to hold the owners responsible for promptly addressing and resolving all issues. During our visits to 400 Eureka Garden apartments, we have issued 163 citations, to date, to Global Ministries Foundation for a variety of code violations including poor electrical, plumbing, environmental, and structural, as well as other unsanitary and unsafe conditions.

As we continue to inspect, strongly enforce, and monitor timelines for resolutions to every issue, we ask for your leadership and support of our efforts. Global Ministries Foundation owns several multi-family dwellings throughout our city – many in communities with the most disparate incidences of violence, health challenges, and poor academic achievement levels. For our city to achieve the “One City. One Jacksonville.” vision I’ve promised, we must ensure accountability for owners and the development of programs, legislation, and procedures that contribute to quality living and standards for all.

Even with the level of disappointment and anguish that remains with me, I could not be more proud of the courage demonstrated by Tracy Grant and the Eureka Gardens Tenant Association who submitted the Sept. 29 letter (attached) identifying the conditions. I am as equally inspired by the extraordinary collaboration that I witnessed by a variety of agencies that also joined us this past Friday. Led by a mission to support the widespread needs of families, representatives from the Jacksonville City Council, Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office, Jacksonville Fire & Rescue Department, American Red Cross, Duval County Public Schools, Jacksonville Transportation Authority, and Jacksonville Electric Authority teamed up with our compliance, building inspection, and social services officials.

As policy makers, you are also an integral part of the team that shares our commitment to improving the lives of Jacksonville citizens. I thank you for your service and request your leadership and support in addressing these issues that threaten the safety and well-being of our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lenny Curry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L" and a long, sweeping underline.

Lenny Curry
Mayor

CC: Dr. Alesia Scott-Ford, Field Office Director
U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development

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