

My name is Charisma white, and I spent far too long searching for housing with a section 8 voucher. I know first hand how difficult the search can be, and I know every voucher holder needs all the help they can get. It is unconscionable that this government would let another year go by without passing a voucher program that covered the maximum number of people currently in the shelter, at a full market rate. Housing Access Voucher Program is what the people of this state need.

HAVP is modeled after the most successful voucher programs across the country. It would provide immediate eviction protections and rapid rehousing to the widest range of new yorkers, from upstate and downstate. It is an essential tool in our recovery efforts from the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have always faced challenges, those of us who are housing insecure, but COVID-19 has been like nothing I have ever seen before. Despite the eviction moratorium the number of folks who have entered the shelter or chose to stay on the street is staggering, and dangerous. Homeless New Yorkers have a 75% higher mortality rate due to the virus then the city overall.

All my adult life I have seen millions of dollars spent on massive luxury housing in the communities I lived in. This housing is not for us. It has driven us into poverty, while the richest new yorkers have benefited exponentially. Even in the pandemic there wealth has grown. Enough is enough- the anger from the street is real. We will not sit by and let the richest New Yorkers continue to loot our communities, and leave us with nothing. The state must ensure that homeless new yorkers are not abandoned , that families facing evictions are not abandoned.

Fight for everyday people- Pass the housing access voucher program, tax the rich and house the poor! Thank you.