



Jeffery K. Patterson
Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Association
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Cleveland, OH 44104-3101

Charles D. Hillman
Columbus Metropolitan Housing Association
880 E. 11th Ave.
Columbus, OH 43211-2771

Gregory D. Johnson
Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Association
1627 Western Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45214

Re: Request to issue zero balance utility bills for CMHA residents prior to federal, state, and local elections

Dear CEO Patterson, CEO Hillman, and CEO Johnson:

All Voting is Local is a campaign that fights to eliminate needless and discriminatory barriers to voting before they happen. Here in Ohio, there are rapid changes taking place to the electoral process and COVID-19 exposed cracks in the system that need to be remedied.

According to [our research](#), Cuyahoga, Franklin, and Hamilton county have the highest provisional ballot usage in the state, specifically in Black and Brown communities. Provisional ballots are considered ballots of last resort. They allow a voter to cast a ballot when they show up to vote in person on Election Day, but encounter an issue. In order for a provisional ballot to be counted, however, the voter has to return it to the board of elections within seven days to cure the defect. Our research details why a ballot may have been rejected but, because the secretary of state does not require counties to report why a person is directed to utilize the provisional ballot on the front end, we are left to hypothesize the reasons.

We know that larger urban counties have a massive transient population. People often move and have delays in updating their state-issued identification and pertinent information. Although advocates are working to help people update their voter registration, proving residency may be a hassle. This is where you can help.

We're requesting that the Housing Authority **print and distribute blank balance utility bills to all of the residents that reside in properties where they don't have to pay utilities, during the month leading up to every local, state, and federal elections.** This allows voters to produce requisite voter identification. This has been a common practice across institutions like state colleges and universities that provide these for on-campus housing. This would be of great benefit for residents who participate with organizations that lease residential space such as Y-Haven in Cleveland, OH.

We are grateful that you continue to support voting by serving as polling locations for seniors specifically; this is a huge value add for our communities! We hope to be proactive in our efforts to ensure that voters are not facing any added burdens in our future elections.

This simple change could be a huge value add to residents throughout the housing network. I'd be happy to meet with you to further discuss our research and any role you can play. I can be reached by email at kayla@allvotingislocal.org or phone at (330) 402-2427 to coordinate a time.

Sincerely,

Kayla Griffin, Ohio State Director
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All Voting is Local fights to eliminate needless and discriminatory barriers to voting before they happen, to build a democracy that works for us all. It is a collaborative campaign housed at The Leadership Conference Education Fund and The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. For more information about All Voting is Local, visit <https://allvotingislocal.org> and follow us on Twitter @votingislocal.