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**House of Representatives**  
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**COMMITTEES**

PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE, CHAIRMAN  
NORTHWEST DELEGATION

June 1, 2026

The Honorable Sylvia King  
Mayor, City of Johnstown  
401 Main St  
Johnstown, PA 15901

Dear Mayor King:

As you search for ways to promote positive change for Johnstown, including making it a safer and more attractive city for residents and businesses, I respectfully ask you to join me in formally calling for the resignation of the current members of the Johnstown Housing Authority Board of Directors.

That would pave the way for you to appoint new JHA leadership committed to working with HUD to right-size public housing in our region to reflect actual local demand, including the demolition of outdated and excess units that no longer serve the long-term interests of our community.

For far too long, the City of Johnstown has borne the weight of failed housing policies that continue to place extraordinary strain on our taxpayers, public safety personnel, schools, hospitals, and social service agencies. Our city simply cannot continue down this path.

I remind you that according to information previously provided by the Johnstown Housing Authority:

- Approximately 80 families per month were moving into Johnstown for public housing opportunities, with the hope of securing a Section 8 voucher.
- Nearly half of Housing Authority units are occupied by individuals from outside Cambria County.
- Johnstown reportedly has five times the number of public housing units compared to similarly sized cities.
- The average annual income of individuals relocating to Johnstown through this system is approximately \$12,500.

As the body responsible for appointing JHA board members, you should not be happy with the leadership that has allowed this to happen.

These policies have effectively created a loophole that allows individuals from larger metropolitan areas, including Philadelphia, to bypass waiting lists for public housing where they live — by simply relocating temporarily to Johnstown with the goal of obtaining a Section 8 voucher before moving back to where they originally came from.

That might be good for them — but the negative consequences for our community have been severe.

Official records show the City of Johnstown Police Department responds to calls at Housing Authority properties an average of 18 times per day. The Johnstown school district reported over 800 students moving into and out of the district within a single year due to the transient nature of this population. Our hospitals, emergency responders, educators, and taxpayers continue to shoulder burdens that our shrinking tax base cannot sustain.

Johnstown currently faces an estimated poverty rate of 31% and a child poverty rate of over 55%. We are a compassionate and generous community that has always helped those in need, but we have reached a breaking point. The current system is unsustainable and is accelerating the decline of our city.


This issue is not about politics or a lack of compassion. It is about protecting the long-term viability of our community — and ensuring that JHA public housing policy is designed to serve the residents and taxpayers of Cambria County, rather than continuing to support a pipeline that overwhelms our limited local resources.

We need new leadership at Johnstown Housing Authority who is willing to acknowledge the scope of the crisis and take the lead with HUD, state officials, county leaders, and local municipalities to reduce the JHA's bloated public housing inventory. Closing loopholes that incentivize abuse of the system and prioritizing local need is what's needed to stabilize neighborhoods that have been disproportionately impacted.

I respectfully ask the Mayor and City Council to stand with me and publicly call for immediate leadership changes at the Johnstown Housing Authority so that meaningful reform can finally begin. You have the power to start the ball rolling on making a real difference.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued service to the people of Johnstown.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Burns". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Frank" being more prominent than the last name "Burns".

Frank Burns  
State Representative  
72<sup>nd</sup> Legislative District

Cc: Members of the Johnstown City Council