



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

JOAN K. CHRISTENSEN
Assemblywoman 119th District

CHAIR
Legislative Commission on
Skills Development and
Career Education

COMMITTEES
Housing
Labor
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Real Property Taxation

February 23, 2010

David R. Smith, MD
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Dear President Smith,

Since the 1960's the city of Syracuse has been losing owner-occupied households at an alarming rate. The trend of absentee landlords converting single family homes into multi-bedroom rental properties for student's puts excess strain on city services. Most people don't know that the residential neighborhood just east of campus -- within walking distance of three hospitals and two universities -- has been losing owner-occupied households faster than the city as a whole.

A well designed employer assisted housing program on University Hill could help reverse this situation. Owner occupied homeowners would stabilize the neighborhood, reduce traffic and congestion caused by commuters, and save these universities and hospitals the enormous sums that would otherwise be spent on parking facilities and traffic control.

Living on University Hill, residents would enjoy the pleasures and the health benefits that result from living in a walkable community, with restaurants, coffee shops, schools and churches just a stroll away. With more residents walking and bicycling to work University Hill institutions would find it easier to meet their ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets.

I hope you'll agree that SEUNA makes a convincing case for an effective Employer Assisted Housing program on University Hill. I encourage you to take immediate steps to establish such a program in order to restore many of these architecturally splendid homes to their past glory and to recapture a family friendly area.

Sincerely,

Joan K. Christensen
Member of Assembly