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April 11th, 1969

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Honorable Ivan Allen, Jr.,  
Mayor, The City of Atlanta  
City Hall, 68 Mitchell Street, S. W.,  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

*Scrub  
Calm te  
Ed Steine  
AHA*

Dear Mayor Allen:

Thank you for your letter of April 10th on the subject of AHA's residency requirement.

As an Atlantan I am entirely sympathetic with the problem you and the city have encountered. I know of your efforts to persuade county officials to build public housing outside the city limits, and I know how frustrating it is to deal with officials who coldly and calmly throw all of their problems onto our shoulders.

A residency requirement for public housing, however, punishes only low-income people. It does not work to force out-of-city officials to build public housing, because poor people are politically weak (especially in non-urban areas) and invariably ignorant about asserting such power as they may have.

The dilemma faced by Atlanta, of course, is grave. Irresponsible officials force people into our city, and irresponsible legislators deny us the funds to deal with the problems their jurisdictions have imposed upon us.

But this dilemma cannot be solved by residency requirements, which are both unconstitutional and unwise. I presume we must attempt to solve our problems by continuing our search for federal and state funds to build new housing.

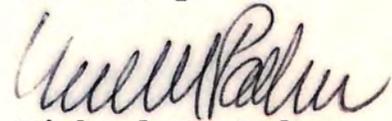
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And while I know it is no answer to the problem you and the city face today, I must point out that Atlanta has built its justifiably brilliant national reputation in large part on the concern you and your administration have shown for the humane resolution of urban problems. Anyone can find an angry solution to the 20th Century: it takes an Ivan Allen to find a calm one.

Legal Aid now has a number of clients who have suffered as a result of AHA's policy. (I understand you discussed one of these clients with Eugene Taylor, a lawyer on this staff.) As I am sure you know I wrote to you and Mr. Sterne not out of any desire to "create an issue," but in the hope of resolving, without litigation or publicity, a very real problem facing a number of clients of this office.

Sincerely,



Michael D. Padnos  
Director

MDP/cj

cc: Mr. Edwin L. Sterne,  
Chairman, Board of Commissioners  
Atlanta Housing Authority