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MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
CYNTHIA A. JOHNSON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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January 28th, 2022

The Office of Mayor Mike Duggan
Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
2 Woodward Ave #1126
Detroit, MI 48226

Dear Mayor Duggan,

On January 26th, FOX 2 Detroit published an article on their website about a man from Florida who was found dead in an abandoned property in the city of Detroit. While the article didn't say how long the deceased man's body was in that abandoned building, the article did say that it took several days to perform the autopsy because they were waiting for his body to thaw. If not for a realtor looking at dilapidated businesses on the city's west side, there is no estimate on when his body would have been found. This tragic news unfortunately highlights the prevailing issue of blight within the city and the wide range of consequences that stem from this long-standing problem.

Across the state, many large cities are currently dealing with a serious blight issue due to people migrating away from those cities and Detroit is no exception. In the past, much of the focus on the issues related to blight have been on decreasing neighborhood populations, issues with selling properties in areas affected by blight, vandalism of these properties and illegal dumping within them. Often it seems as though these issues deter not only investors, but also City employees and contractors from properly maintaining these properties and the areas that they reside. Our office has brought several examples of neglect and illegal dumping to your office's attention with little to no resolution on these issues. Some of these concerns involve criminal activity occurring within abandoned properties, such as drug use and distribution, prostitution, and other violent crimes.

This past week, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services heard testimony from survivors of human trafficking. This testimony provided insight into various locations that human trafficking continues to operate in this state and nation. Vacant abandoned properties, such as the one described in the FOX 2 Detroit article, are one of these known locations. In light of a deceased body being discovered in an abandoned property and several patterns of non-violent crime at various abandoned properties having already been reported, there is reason to suspect that serious and violent illegal activity may also be occurring within various abandoned buildings throughout the city. Because of this, I am

requesting that all abandoned properties in the city of Detroit be thoroughly searched for any signs of illegal activity. As public officials, we have a duty to the safety and well-being of our constituents. This includes supporting our law enforcement with the tools and initiatives necessary to provide our constituents with safe neighborhoods and peace-of-mind. I want to thank you for your time, and I hope that you share in my commitment to public safety and law enforcement by granting my request.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cynthia A. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Cynthia A. Johnson
State Representative
Michigan House District 5

CC: Mary Sheffield, Detroit City Council President
James Tate, Detroit City Council President Pro Tem
Gabriela Santiago-Romero, Detroit's Sixth District City Council Representative
Fred Durhal III, Detroit's Seventh District City Council Representative