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November 5, 2021

Honorable Max Baer
Chief Justice
Supreme Court of Pennsylvania
c/o Office of the Prothonotary
Room 468, City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

FILED IN
SUPREME COURT

NOV 08 2021

EASTERN
DISTRICT

**Re: Response in Support of Pennsylvania Supreme Court Order No. 21 EM 2020
Authorization for Continuation of the Philadelphia Municipal Court
Landlord-Tenant Diversion Program**

Dear Justices of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania:

I am writing to request your ongoing support for Philadelphia's nationally renowned use of Alternative Dispute Resolution in eviction proceedings. I appreciate your leadership in continuing to extend authority for Philadelphia to require landlords to apply for rental assistance and participate in Philadelphia's pre-filing Eviction Diversion Program ("EDP"), most recently via your Order dated October 28, 2021, No. 21 EM 2020.

I have been providing pro bono legal services as a volunteer mediator in the EDP since September 2020. It has been an extremely rewarding pro bono experience. More importantly, week after week being able to assist Landlords and Tenants reach agreement and resolve their issues outside of the stress of the Municipal Court setting has seemed to be a relief to all participants in the EDP.

I would like to request that you continue to extend Philadelphia's authority beyond November 30, 2021. The EDP's close to 90% success rate for agreement between Landlords and Tenants should be recognized by continuing this very successful program.

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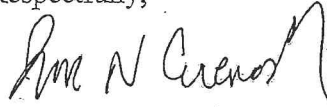
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I further request that you grant this authority to other counties, so that residents there can also benefit from collaboration between the courts, rental assistance, and other stabilizing measures. To do so, I respectfully request that you issue a rule that allows a local county's President Judge to issue their own local rule creating or coordinating with Alternative Dispute Resolution ("ADR") procedures in eviction proceedings, if they so choose.

Philadelphia has received national attention for its EDP and the collaboration between the Court, the Diversion Program and the rental assistance program from the Department of Justice, White House, Urban Institute and major national media outlets. More importantly, Philadelphia has avoided the wave of evictions previously predicted. Eviction filings in Philadelphia are less than a third of what they were pre-pandemic. It makes sense to continue this successful program in Philadelphia and to make it available in other Pennsylvania counties.

Respectfully,



Teresa N. Cavenagh
Of Counsel

TNC/ks