

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:  
APPROPRIATIONS  
FOREIGN RELATIONS  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE  
SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

February 27, 2019

The Honorable John W. Henderson  
Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Environment and Energy  
1665 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20330

Dear Assistant Secretary Henderson:

This letter concerns the current safety of military housing associated with MacDill Air Force Base's Public Private Venture (PPV) privatized family housing. As reported in testimony from servicemembers' families earlier this month to the Senate Committee on Armed Services, unhealthy living conditions, such as the prevalent and harmful existence of black mold in family housing is of great concern.

As you know, the Military Housing Privatization Initiative (MHPI) was enacted as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 1996. Since the MHPI enactment, I am concerned that the Department has lost focus in conducting proper oversight of this critical part of our military readiness. We must ensure our military personnel are able to be fully focused on the task of defending our nation, not distracted from their efforts by unhealthy living conditions of their loved ones.

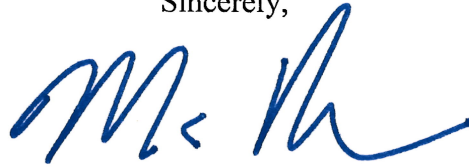
The Department should do more to educate military families on Public Private Venture (PPV) privatized housing policies and procedures, including on housing matters such as maintenance policies, renter's insurance, town meetings, and grievance procedures to name a few. Military families should have a stronger hand in housing disputes by empowering installation commanders and military housing advocates to swiftly arbitrate and resolve military housing issues. We should strengthen the Servicemember's Civil Relief Act to hold PPV housing companies accountable for lack of performance and create penalties, including withholding of BAH/rent in escrow or lease termination due to breach of PPV contract. Finally, we need to develop detailed contractor performance criteria.

Since the establishment of the MHPI, market forces have been used as a primary tool to assess contractor performance. Due to a skewed market, occupancy rates are not the most accurate assessment tool of contractor performance. Realizing this, we need to develop oversight measures of PPV contractors to best manage and encourage outstanding performance.

Undoubtedly, our most valuable resource in the defense of our nation are the brave men and women answering the call to serve and the invaluable support provided by their loved ones. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

I look forward to continuing our work on military readiness and the quality of life for our service members and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Rubio', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator