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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 22, 1982

Tonight, the Cambridge City Council will be asked to reaffirm its commitment to Rent Control by voting as a newly elected and organized body to retain Rent Control in Cambridge for the years of this Council, 1982 and 1983.

All of us who were witness to the severe effects of housing speculation in Cambridge in the 1960's know that this City cannot function effectively and peacefully without rent and eviction controls for a significant portion of our housing stock. It is an imperfect remedy; chiefly because it does not target its benefits. It is a social policy that was intended to help low, moderate and elderly residents, but all too often helps affluent and transient sections of our community as well.

Nevertheless, I fear that this City would plunge into strife without Rent and Eviction Control and therefore, I reaffirm my commitment to this policy. I have serious questions which need examination concerning this and other components of our housing policy. I intend to ask these questions in the coming months.

Are we truly concerned with housing for the poor?

What are we doing to improve the quality of housing in places where our poor population lives?

Are we turning our back on this housing as it falls off the edge and becomes victimized by fire, neglect and abandonment?

Is the housing stock of the Cambridge Housing Authority being fully and properly utilized?

Is it helping Cambridge people who need the help which it offers?

Is the Rental Removal Ordinance actually serving us well?

Who is being hindered by its precepts? Landlords? Tenants? Both?

Is our "housing energy" being spent chiefly on a policy which concerns itself primarily with the affluent, the educated, the transient and the big apartment-house owners.

Where is our "housing energy" directed, as it should be, towards the poor, the working classes and the elderly?

Are they being passed over and forgotten in the perpetuation of a condo crisis, because some seek political advantage in this crisis?

Does the Rent Control Board do its job?

Does it do it well?

Could it be done better, so that people without substantial means can get through the process?

My "housing energy" for this term will be spent dealing with the housing needs of the most vulnerable people in our community: the poor; the working classes and the elderly. Those who genuinely share this concern can join me in this effort. Those who seek to play politics at the upper-end of our housing inventory to the detriment of those stuck at the bottom will find that my patience has grown thin.

This is the term when the Council will show that it has regained its proper focus. This is the term when the people of Cambridge who truly need the help, the guidance and the energy of the City Council on housing matters will find that the City Council is ready to put its shoulder to the wheel on their behalf.

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Comm. from Mayor Vellucci relative to rent
and eviction controls in the City.

In City Council,

February 22, 1982