

81A Winchester St.
Brookline, Ma. 02146

July 22, 1976

The Honorable Michael S. Dukakis
Governor, Commonwealth of Mass.
The State House
Boston, Mass. 02133

Dear Sir:

I am a clerk in the Emergency Room of the Cambridge City Hospital. On this past Sunday, July 18, we received an emergency case who arrived via the Cambridge Fire Department Rescue truck, a 73 year old woman who had been struck by a car in the vicinity of a housing project known as Washington Elms. While she was being treated, her daughter who had accompanied her and who is also a resident of this Washington Elms, gave me a brief description of life in this particular housing project. Her story left me completely terrified and heartbroken at the fact that these conditions prevailed and seemingly flourished in a part of this country where "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness" have been the rule and guarantee for two hundred years.

I feel that as an honest, compassionate, and feeling human being and an American, I must relate this story to you in the hope that you are of the same human disposition, and that something may be done to help the residents of Washington Elms and other similar housing projects throughout the state.

The following are excerpts of the conversation I was engaged in on July 18 with the daughter of the woman brought in for emergency treatment:

With regards to the physical environment: some windows are covered with slabs of boards; some apartments, and indeed, some buildings have been set afire; some apartments and also some buildings have been blown up by explosives.

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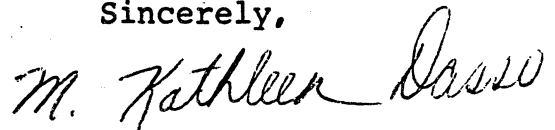
With regards to the mental, and perhaps criminal, element that exists in Washington Elms: that almost every young male resident has been stabbed at least once; that a young male had a machete driven through his chest and lung by another male at this project; that a young male was thrown from a third floor window which resulted in paralysis from the waist down; that an elderly woman was set upon by at least two youths and was repeatedly beaten about the head with a baseball bat; that elderly persons cower behind their boarded-up windows in fear of their lives, and walk the streets infrequently and with feelings of paranoia.

These are but a few of the cases I have heard and, in fact, some have been patients at this very hospital.

I have been and still am sickened at the idea of such atrocities. I have written this letter hoping others would also be sickened at the degradation, humiliation, and most importantly, brutalization of fellow human beings and who would care enough to do something about it. If something isn't done, to afford the residents of this project or others better protection, the destruction of life and property will get continually worse. I implore you to do whatever you can to improve the quality of life at Washington Elms and other similar projects.

I will appreciate a prompt response to this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M. Kathleen Dasso". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Kathleen Dasso

Copies to:
Mayor of Cambridge
Cambridge City Council ✓
Cambridge Housing Authority

S-392

Comm. from Kathleen Dasso, 81A Winchester St.,
Brookline, re: to Washington Elms and other
similar housing projects throughout the state.

RECEIVED BY
OFFICE OF CITY CLERK
JUL 29 6 35 PM '76
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

In City Council,

September 13, 1976

Copy sent to C/Gr. 9-16-76
9/13/76

Referred to the
City Manager

Report Required.

Letter sent to City
mgr. 9/15/76 dl