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January 8, 2025

Sherri Farris  
Michaels VP of Military Operations  
Michaels Organization  
2 Cooper Street  
Camden, NJ 08102

RE: Michaels Organization Failure to Timely Repair Harbor Bay housing for U.S. service members and families at MacDill Air Force Base following Hurricanes

Dear Ms. Farris,

I am very concerned with the failure of the Michaels Organization (“Michaels”) to timely repair the housing of U.S. service members who reside at Harbor Bay at MacDill Air Force Base (AFB) following Hurricanes Helene and Milton some months ago. I understand that numerous requests have been relayed to Michaels from the base commander and others regarding the deteriorated living conditions and quality of life of our military families at MacDill, yet Michaels continues to fail to meet its responsibilities to provide safe and healthy housing in good repair.

As you are aware, MacDill AFB in Tampa, Florida is home to the 6th Air Refueling Wing and a number of additional mission partners including U.S. Central Command, U.S. Special Operations Command and the 927th Air Refueling Wing. Hurricanes Helene and Milton struck two weeks apart in late September and early October and inflicted significant damage to homes and businesses across the Tampa Bay area including MacDill. Since that time, neighbors – including service members from all branches of our military who call MacDill AFB their home – have been doing their best to get back on their feet.

It has been brought to my attention that Harbor Bay’s overall quality of service and attention to tenant needs has been below standard, not only following the hurricanes, but for quite some time. Harbor Bay previously dragged its feet to remediate mold and mildew. It has been reported to me

that your staff is significantly delayed in its response time to individual tenant requests, whether it be for a simple bathroom repair or a more serious report of mold in a home. More specifically, as it relates to the recent hurricanes, I was told that your staff has failed to communicate with displaced tenants on the status of home repairs. I understand that a Town Hall event was held in November, where an overwhelming number of questions and concerns around housing were raised by members of the community, but were met with little to no answers from Harbor Bay.

It is incredibly disheartening to hear that the longstanding housing issues at Harbor Bay have persisted and worsened. Back in 2019, various MacDill families initiated a lawsuit against the Michaels Organization due to the unsafe housing quality and poor maintenance work at Harbor Bay. Harbor Bay and Michaels severely failed to timely address issues then. Consequently, in 2019 I championed a military family housing bill of rights, part of a comprehensive reform to address issues pertaining to health, safety and environmental hazards in privatized military housing. As you may be aware, this ‘tenant bill of rights’ was ultimately included in the FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and implemented across the Department of Defense.

It is with this ‘Tenant Bill of Rights’ in mind that I respectfully request answers to the following questions:

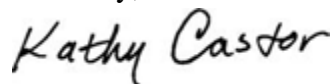
1. What are Harbor Bay and the Michaels Organization doing to repair homes now? How are you communicating with service member tenants and families? How do you propose to improve customer service?
  - a. Please explain your process to receive and respond to tenant maintenance/repair requests.
  - b. What is the average time in which a request is fulfilled and what does communication with the tenant look like during this process?
2. In your view, what are issues you are facing as it relates to fulfilling your responsibilities to tenants?

Regarding Hurricanes Helene and Milton:

1. Please provide a summary of the damage experienced across your properties.
  - a. How many people were/are displaced?
  - b. What has been your process to provide temporary housing to displaced tenants?
2. How have you provided updates and communicated with the community at large throughout your hurricane restoration efforts?
3. What is your approach to rebuilding and restoring Harbor Bay properties following natural disasters?
  - a. Do you implement cost-saving climate resilience measures as you rebuild and restore?

Plain and simple, military families deserve high quality housing, and reports of substandard conditions of on-base Harbor Bay housing are unacceptable. I trust that you agree that families who serve America and have already sacrificed so much to protect their fellow Americans deserve better. Therefore, I respectfully request that you provide a response to my inquiry as soon as possible and vastly improve the Harbor Bay at MacDill operations. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact my Legislative Assistant, Daniela Clark-Murrieta, at [daniela.clark-murrieta@mail.house.gov](mailto:daniela.clark-murrieta@mail.house.gov) or 202-225-3376.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Castor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress

CC: General David W. Allvin, Chief of Staff of the Air Force  
Colonel Edward V. Szczepanik, Commander, 6<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing, MacDill Air Force  
Base  
Tampa Bay Congressional Delegation  
House Armed Services Committee  
Tampa Bay Defense Alliance