



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 9/12/17

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New Analysis Highlights Importance of Renters to the Nation’s Economic Vitality

Renters who pay too much for housing would have an additional \$6,200 if rents were affordable

OAKLAND – Renters now represent the majority in the nation’s 100 largest cities, are growing as a share of the population nationwide, and contribute billions to local economies from Oakland to Miami. The economic success of cities and the nation depends more on renters than ever before. However, renters face a toxic mix of rising rents and stagnant wages, both of which add up to an unprecedented housing affordability crisis that stymies their ability to contribute to the broader economy and thrive.

A new analysis from the [National Equity Atlas](#), a partnership between PolicyLink and the USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity, reveals what renters and the nation stand to gain from addressing this affordability crisis. If renters paid only what was affordable for housing, they would have \$124 billion extra to spend in the community every year, or \$6,200 per rent-burdened household. Unfortunately, 51 percent of renter households nationally now pay too much for housing (more than 30 percent of their income on rent and utilities)—up from 39 percent in 2000.

“The data is abundantly clear,” said **Angela Glover Blackwell, CEO of PolicyLink**. “Renters are the lifeblood of cities. If rents were affordable, renters could meet their basic needs like transportation, food, and child care and contribute even more to thriving communities. This would have a positive ripple effect throughout their regions.”

The National Equity Atlas team analyzed the impact of the growing affordability crisis in support of the [Renter Week of Action](#) occurring September 16-24. The data will be used by renters in over 45 cities to educate policymakers about the need to strengthen renter rights and protections, ensure full funding for HUD, and increase community control of land and housing.

PolicyLink has published the [national analysis](#) as part of its ongoing collaboration with [CarsonWatch](#), an alliance of national policy and civil rights organizations, advocates and grassroots partners demanding housing justice.

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