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***Letter Template***

Subject: Urgent Appeal for Adequate Support for Helena-West Helena's Water Crisis

Dear Sarah Huckabee Sanders,

I hope this letter finds you well and in good spirits. I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the ongoing water crisis in Helena-West Helena and the response it has received from our state government. The recent events surrounding this issue are deeply troubling, and it is imperative that immediate action is taken to address the urgent needs of our fellow Arkansans in this community.

The residents of Helena-West Helena have been facing a dire situation for the past few weeks due to the failure of their dated water system. This crisis has forced the city to shut down its water supply to residents, leading to severe hardships for its citizens. The National Guard had to step in to provide potable drinking water, highlighting the severity of the situation. In response to this crisis, the state approved a loan of \$100,000 to assist in "fixing leaks" and initiating repairs. While this assistance is appreciated, it falls far short of what is required to address the magnitude of the problem.

What is of great concern to me, and many others in our community, is the perceived disparity in how state resources and support are allocated. It raises a valid question: Would the response have been different if this had occurred in a more affluent part of our state or if the affected water system served a Central Arkansas community?

One of the fundamental roles of government is to provide essential public goods and services, and this includes investing in infrastructure that is vital to the well-being of its citizens. When the government neglects this duty, the people suffer. Sadly, the people of Helena-West Helena are suffering due to historical neglect, and it cannot be denied that issues of race and inequity play a significant role in this neglect.

The median household income in Helena-West Helena is alarmingly low, making it one of the poorest communities in our country. Much of the region's infrastructure is outdated, dilapidated, and in desperate need of repair. It is disheartening to see that basic government services are not being adequately provided to this community.

I cannot help but draw parallels between this situation and other recent events where our state government has shown a marked difference in its response based on geography and

demographics. It is crucial to recognize that every Arkansan, regardless of where they live or their background, deserves equal access to clean drinking water and essential services.

Arkansas is currently in a fortunate fiscal position, with a substantial surplus of \$1.1 billion. This surplus presents a unique opportunity to invest in the lives of our citizens by addressing pressing issues like the water crisis in Helena-West Helena. We should prioritize the well-being and basic needs of our residents over hoarding taxpayer dollars.

I implore you, as a representative of our community, to use your influence to advocate for increased support for Helena-West Helena. The people of this community deserve more than a loan; they deserve a comprehensive solution to their water crisis. We must ensure that the state government allocates resources equitably and addresses the urgent needs of all its citizens.

The residents of Helena-West Helena, along with Arkansans across the state, deserve better. Let us work together to ensure that our state government lives up to its responsibility of providing essential services and improving the lives of all its citizens.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing matter. I look forward to hearing about your efforts to secure the necessary support for Helena-West Helena.

Sincerely,

Amelia Southern Uribe

***Instagram post***



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