

**A. DONALD McEACHIN**

4TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

**WASHINGTON OFFICE**

314 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-6365

**RICHMOND DISTRICT OFFICE**

110 N. ROBINSON ST. SUITE 401  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23220  
(804) 486-1840



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-4604**

**COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES**  
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS (RANKING MEMBER)

FEDERAL LANDS

**COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

SEA POWER AND PROJECTION FORCES

READINESS

**FRANKING COMMISSION**

December 3, 2018

Mr. Orlando Artze  
Interim CEO, Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority  
901 Chamberlayne Parkway  
Richmond, VA 23220

Dear Mr. Artze:

I was disappointed and very concerned to see the enclosed CBS 6 news stories about the young family in Whitcomb Court, a Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) property, suffering a rodent infestation. As you are well aware, rats and mice can not only be discomfoting and frightening, but can also be carriers of serious diseases. This is not only a dangerous situation but a health and safety hazard for the small child and his pregnant mother.

I am disturbed that this family has had to repeatedly call whenever they see a rodent in their apartment. Rather than attempting to resolve each episode, RRHA needs a systematic plan to eradicate these pests that does not depend on a frightened child alerting his mother to an invader in his bedroom.

I hope that the family has been offered the option and encouraged to vacate the premises for a short time so this unacceptable situation can be quickly and completely remedied. I certainly expect that RRHA would provide convenient alternative housing so the family's life is as undisturbed as possible.

This very concerning condition must be addressed completely, efficiently, and expeditiously. I also hope that the rest of the complex will be thoroughly checked. In my experience, rarely is an infestation limited to one residence.

Please keep me regularly apprised as RRHA resolves this issue. I am copying Mayor Levar Stoney, Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson, and the Richmond City Council so they are aware of these egregious circumstances.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this serious matter.

Sincerely,

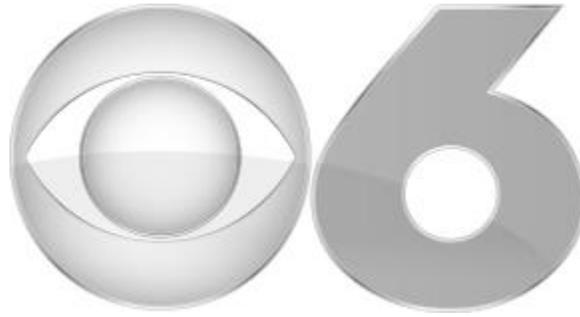
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A. Donald McEachin".

A. Donald McEachin  
Member of Congress

cc: Mayor Stoney, City of Richmond  
Secretary Carson, Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Members of Richmond City Council

# Enclosure 1

<https://wtvr.com/2018/11/30/rats-mice-vermin-infestation-whitcomb-court/>



## Officials working to help pregnant mother living with vermin infestation

by web staff

RICHMOND, Va. -- Officials with the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) said they are working to fix a vermin infestation in a pregnant mother's apartment following a CBS 6 Problem Solvers report.

RRHA spokesperson Orlando Artze said crews are working to fix the issue in Brittany Duncan's apartment because it is a health and safety issue.

Artze said crews laid down more sticky traps and patched up two holes on Friday that mice may be using to access the apartment.

Additionally, Artze said that if the vermin problem continues over the weekend they will look to relocate Duncan to another apartment within that complex.

Duncan told CBS 6 that her apartment has been inundated.

"I've killed at least, and I'm not lying, probably 30 or 40 mice here," Duncan said Wednesday from her Whitcomb Court apartment. "It's rats. It's mice. Some are this big. At this point, I'm at a loss. If they're not doing anything, what am I supposed to do? It is an infestation and I can't handle it on my own."

Duncan posted pictures and videos on social media after a harrowing experience a few days ago in her son's room.

"He said mom there's a baby lizard on my floor. I was like what is that? It was a whole rat with blood. and it was moving and stuff," said Duncan. "My son now can't sleep because he's so scared. He comes into my room crying because he hears the mouse squeaking. It's horrible."

The pregnant mom says it is a huge health/safety concern. She's worried about what she might be breathing in and how it's affecting her other children.

"When I posted my video on Facebook, a lot of people said they have the same problem but they don't know how to go about the situation. So I was like no, I'm not living like this. Not my kids. They deserve way better. Just because I live in the projects doesn't mean I have to live like this," Duncan added.

Artze previously said crews would do a thorough assessment of the apartment and try to identify the source of the rodent infestation so they can treat it at the source.

If it requires chemicals, he says the family would have to leave their apartment for a little while. In the meantime, he says their maintenance team went to the home Tuesday to do some work.

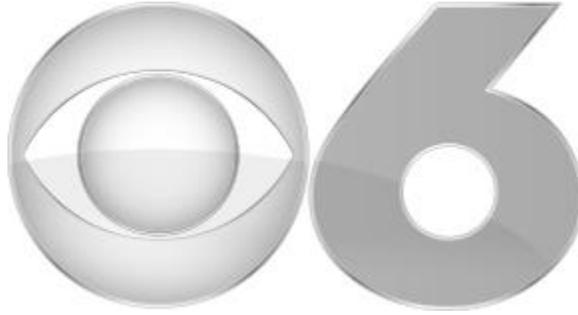
Duncan says they came in and repaired the stove and replaced some of the cabinets. Still, she says that's not enough. She won't be satisfied until all of the rodents are gone.

A Richmond health department officials said because this is a health/safety issues, they have the authority to conduct an inspection. If things are so egregious, a citation could be given to the owner, which is RRHA.

# # #

## Enclosure 2

<https://wtvr.com/2018/11/28/rat-infestation-upsets-richmond-mom/>



### **Pregnant mom pleads for help with rat infestation: ‘My son cannot sleep because he’s so scared’**

by Shelby Brown

RICHMOND, Va. -- Brittany Duncan’s Christmas tree is up but her family hasn’t really been able to enjoy it much.

Instead of presents under the tree, she worries about something else beneath it.

Mice - and lots of them.

“I’ve killed at least, and I’m not lying, probably thirty or forty mice here,” Duncan added. She says they have taken over her Whitcomb Court apartment.

“It’s rats. It’s mice. Some are this big. At this point, I’m at a loss. If they’re not doing anything, what am I supposed to do? It is an infestation and I can’t handle it on my own,” Duncan said.

She told CBS 6 Problem Solvers that she has reached out to RRHA repeatedly and isn’t satisfied with the response.

Management tells CBS 6 that they have always responded each time Duncan puts in a ticket about a rodent issue. At one point, spokesperson Orlando Artze says maintenance crews patched up a hole and put down sticky traps to catch the mice.

Frustrated, Duncan posted pictures and videos on social media after a harrowing experience a few days ago in her son’s room.

“He said mom there’s a baby lizard on my floor. I was like what is that? It was a whole rat with blood. and it was moving and stuff,” said Duncan. “My son now can’t sleep because he’s so scared. He comes into my room crying because he hears the mouse squeaking. It’s horrible.”

The pregnant mom says it is a huge health/safety concern. She’s worried about what she might be breathing in and how it’s affecting her other children.

“When I posted my video on Facebook, a lot of people said they have the same problem but they don’t know how to go about the situation. So I was like no, I’m not living like this. Not my kids. They deserve way better. Just because I live in the projects doesn’t mean I have to live like this,” Duncan added.

RRHA spokesperson Orlando Artze tells us they will continue to respond to Duncan’s service calls. The goal now, Artze says is to do a thorough assessment of the apartment and try to identify the source of the rodent infestation. That way they can treat it at the source.

If it requires chemicals, he says the family would have to leave their apartment for a little while. In the meantime, he says their maintenance team went to the home Tuesday to do some work.

Duncan says they came in and repaired the stove and replaced some of the cabinets. Still, she says that's not enough. She won't be satisfied until all of the rodents are gone.

A Richmond health department official tells us these are health/safety issues. Whenever they get a complaint like this, they have the authority to conduct an inspection. If things are so egregious, a citation could be given to the owner, which is RRHA.

# # #