

National Low Income Housing Coalition



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Civil Rights, Housing, and Community Development Organizations Call on HUD to Maintain a Critical Fair Housing Tool and Not to Roll Back the Promise of the Fair Housing Act

Washington DC – Seventy-six national civil rights, faith-based, affordable housing, and other organizations have voiced their strong opposition to HUD’s sudden and short-sighted decision to effectively suspend the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) regulation.

Nearly 50 years ago, Congress adopted the Fair Housing Act, landmark legislation necessary to end discrimination in housing and eliminate the barriers created by segregation. The AFFH regulation—designed with considerable public input—was added in 2015 and was considered a critical and overdue step in carrying out Congress’ intent. It gave jurisdictions a roadmap and tools for compliance and included measures for accountability. Without warning, HUD has decided effectively to suspend the regulation, leaving local jurisdictions confused, giving local residents less voice in important decisions about their communities, and reinstating an approach to fair housing that the Government Accountability Office found to be ineffective and poorly administered.

“HUD’s effective suspension of the rule does nothing to help local governments fulfill their fair housing responsibilities to create equitable, healthy communities and provide access to housing without discrimination,” says Angela Glover Blackwell, CEO for PolicyLink. “It is the wrong move, particularly at a time when housing needs are so severe and housing and community development resources are so scarce. And by taking this step, HUD is abrogating its duty to carry out the mission Congress assigned it 50 years ago.”

“Americans strongly believe that a zip code should not determine a child’s future and that everyone – regardless of their race or national origin, the language they speak, or whether they have children or have a disability – should have access to the opportunities they need to succeed,” said Shanna L. Smith, president and CEO for the National Fair Housing Alliance. “But we are falling short of achieving that goal. Actions taken over many years by HUD, other government agencies and the private sector have left us more segregated than we were 100 years ago. That has led to concentrated poverty and weaker communities and undermines our prosperity. We need HUD to enforce this important rule, not suspend it.”

“The administration’s abrupt decision to effectively suspend this critical regulation is misguided,” says Diane Yentel, president and CEO of the National Low Income Housing Coalition. “The federal government, states, and local communities have been required by law since 1968 to work to undo the segregated communities that federal housing policy created in the first place. Suspending the tools that help communities meet that obligation, without any input from key stakeholders, is a step in the wrong direction.”

“The obligation of local governments to ‘affirmatively further fair housing’ is essential to fulfilling the promises of the Fair Housing Act, particularly this year, the 50th Anniversary of this key civil rights law,” said Sherrilyn Ifill, president and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. “HUD’s proposed suspension would roll back one of the law’s most critical tools to correct structural inequality and racial segregation and represents yet another attack by this Administration on communities of color across the country.”

“HUD’s decision to suspend a critical rule that has helped promote fair housing across the country is a firm demonstration of Secretary Ben Carson’s hostility to fair enforcement and implementation of the Fair Housing Act,” said Kristen Clarke, president and executive director of the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. “We will not stand by idly as HUD works to roll back the important gains that have been made to promote fair housing opportunities across the country.”

HUD’s announcement today is a serious loss for fair housing and puts the promise of making every neighborhood a community of opportunity further out of reach. We call on HUD to reverse its decision, withdraw this notice, and move ahead with implementation and enforcement of this important fair housing rule. And we call on Congress to provide policy and budgetary oversight of HUD to ensure it is delivering on the promise of fair and equitable housing.

This statement is issued on behalf of:

Action Center on Race and the Economy Institute

American Civil Liberties Union

Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living

Autism Society of America

Autistic Self Advocacy Network

California Reinvestment Coalition

CarsonWatch

Center for Popular Democracy

Center for Responsible Lending

Center for Social Innovation

Center for the Study of Social Policy

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

Coalition on Human Needs

Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Housing Task Force

Consumer Action

Consumer Federation of America

Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)

Enterprise Community Partners

Equal Justice Society

First Focus

FORGE, Inc.

GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBT Equality

Grounded Solutions Network

Housing Assistance Council

Impact Fund

Japanese American Citizens League

Lambda Legal

Latino Justice PRLDEF

Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

Local Progress

LOCUS: Responsible Real Estate Developers and Investors

Low Income Investment Fund

NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.

National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations

National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)

National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders

National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities

National Association of Human Rights Workers

National Center for Lesbian Rights

National Center for Transgender Equality

National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (CAPACD)

National Community Reinvestment Coalition

National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low-income clients)

National Council of Churches

National Disability Rights Network

National Education Association

National Equality Action Team (NEAT)

National Fair Housing Alliance

National Health Care for the Homeless Council

National Housing Law Project

National Housing Trust

National Juvenile Justice Network

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty

National LGBTQ Task Force

National Low Income Housing Coalition

National Network to End Domestic Violence

National Urban League

Paralyzed Veterans of America

PFLAG National

PolicyLink

Poor Peoples Economic Human Rights Campaign

Poverty & Race Research Action Council

Pride at Work

Prosperity Now

Public Advocates Inc.

Public Citizen

Smart Growth America

Technical Assistance Collaborative

The Arc of the United States

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

Transgender Law Center

Treatment Communities of America

UnidosUS (formerly National Council of La Raza)

United Way Worldwide

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Established in 1974 by Cushing N. Dolbeare, the [National Low Income Housing Coalition](#) is dedicated solely to achieving socially just public policy that assures people with the lowest incomes in the United States have affordable and decent homes.

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