

For Immediate Release
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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 – 76 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 and piloted extensively — was adopted in 2015 and was a critical and long overdue step in carrying out Congress’ intent. It provided jurisdictions with 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 fulfill 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 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.

For media inquiries, contact:

Jessica Brady, Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, (202) 662-8600 x 8317, press@lawyerscommittee.org

Phoebe Plagens, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., 212.965.2235, pplagens@naacpldf.org

Jesse Meisenhelter, National Community Reinvestment Coalition, jmeisenhelter@ncrc.org, 202-464-2737

Debby Goldberg, National Fair Housing Alliance, Dgoldberg@nationalfairhousing.org, 202-898-1661 or Jessica Aiwuyor, National Fair Housing Alliance, Jaiwuyor@nationalfairhousing.org, 202-898-1661

Renee Willis, National Housing Law Project, Media@nlihc.org, 202-662-1530

Lisa Marlow, National Low Income Housing Coalition, Lmarlow@nlihc.org, 202-662-1530

Milly Hawk Daniel, PolicyLink, Milly@policylink.org, 917-658-6468

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
LatinoJustice 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