On December 5, 2016, President-Elect Donald Trump announced that Dr. Ben Carson, a neurosurgeon and former Presidential candidate, will be his nominee for Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD’s “mission is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all” and “build inclusive and sustainable communities free from discrimination.”[1] To this end, HUD officials should continue to aggressively enforce the Fair Housing Act (FHA) which is dedicated to ensuring access to our country's housing is free of discrimination, including expeditiously and thoroughly investigating race and national origin complaints, ensuring fair mortgage lending for homeowners, and carrying out strategies to end homelessness. All of the policies are critical to achieving economic justice and advancement in this country.

Any prospective HUD Secretary must be steeped in the complexities of housing policy and have a significant commitment to civil rights and fair housing. The new HUD secretary must also be prepared to continue to implement the new HUD rule advancing the FHA’s mandate to affirmatively further fair housing, “a major push against America’s deeply entrenched housing segregation.”[2] The rule requires “local communities to assess their own patterns of racial and income segregation and make genuine plans to address them” in order to dismantle the legacy of “government and private-sector discrimination that has resulted in poor, segregated neighborhoods persisting to this day.”[3]

There is little publicly available information to indicate that Dr. Carson has any meaningful experience or expertise in fair housing policy. Rather, all publicly available information connecting Dr. Carson to federal housing policy indicates a deep incomprehension of its significance and scope. In 2015, for example, in *Experimenting*

[3] See *Id.*
with Failed Socialism Again, Dr. Carson wrote that the new HUD rule was a “government-engineered attempt[] to legislate racial equality” and reflected a history of “failed social experiments.”[4] Dr. Carson’s views are cause for concern as they reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of the role of the FHA and its mandate to affirmatively further fair housing, a mandate acknowledged by both Democratic and Republican HUD Secretaries.[5] The Legal Defense Fund will continue to review Dr. Carson’s record carefully concerning these issues and call for a rigorous interrogation by the Senate of his fitness to occupy this important post.

For more information or to speak with an LDF expert further, please contact Phoebe Plagens at 212-965-2235/pplagens@naacpldf.org or Kelly Landis, 202-216-5565/klandis@naacpldf.org

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.