



**For Immediate Release**  
Monday, September 22, 2025

**LDF Media**  
[media@naacpldf.org](mailto:media@naacpldf.org)

**LDF Commends Whistleblowers for Their Complaint about the Administration's Decision to Abandon Housing Discrimination Enforcement and Compliance**

A recent [New York Times](#) article reports that civil rights attorneys at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) filed a whistleblower complaint stating that the Trump administration is actively rolling back enforcement of laws that protect against housing discrimination, including the Fair Housing Act of 1968, one of our nation's most important civil rights laws. The whistleblower complaint states that political appointees with no legal background are reversing decisions to prosecute housing discrimination made by career attorneys based on the facts and the law. As a result of such political interference, discrimination charges and settlements have been illegally withdrawn. The complaint outlines a calculated effort to limit civil rights enforcement and compliance at a time when it is increasingly difficult for Black people to access housing without experiencing discrimination.

In response to these developments, **Demetria McCain, Legal Defense Fund (LDF) Director of Policy**, issued the following statement.

"HUD's decision to limit its enforcement of the Fair Housing Act represents a more than troubling retreat from the agency's responsibility to protect residents and those seeking housing from discrimination. The pain and harm from decades of housing discrimination against Black communities across our country gave birth to the Fair Housing Act. By weakening fair housing enforcement of complaints filed by the public and the loss of fair housing compliance review of HUD programs, the administration is undermining decades of progress.

"Even more alarming, HUD's abandonment of its civil rights responsibilities is not an isolated incident – it is part of a broader pattern of this administration dismantling the very agencies designed to safeguard our most fundamental housing rights. This dismantling reflects the administration's overall retreat from federally mandated laws designed to level the playing field and promote equality.

"HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) annually reports the breadth of its work to Congress through its [State of Fair Housing Report](#), which

evidences the need for ample staffing amidst the required steps that must be followed when housing discrimination is investigated. We call on Congress to demand an end to political interference at HUD and other agencies, investigate the administration's attempt to dismantle civil rights, and ensure federal civil rights agencies fulfill their fundamental duty to ensure Black people and other groups that experience illegal discrimination can access housing, living wage jobs, and other opportunities without discriminatory barriers.

“The public should know their right to fair housing has not been rescinded. If you face discrimination, you can and should continue to file complaints with HUD. And LDF, together with our civil rights partners, will continue fighting to hold this administration accountable and ensure these hard-won protections are not hollowed out. HUD may be abdicating its responsibility, but LDF will not.”

The Fair Housing Act protects people from discrimination in housing based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), familial status, and disability. In addition to the Fair Housing Act, Congress tasked HUD with ensuring enforcement and compliance of several other civil rights statutes, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Violence Against Women Act, and others.

The stated mission of HUD's FHEO is to eliminate housing discrimination, promote economic opportunity, and achieve diverse, inclusive communities by leading the nation in the enforcement, administration, development, and public understanding of federal fair housing policies and laws. To achieve this, FHEO relies on a staff of experienced fair housing attorneys and other staff, with the assistance of HUD's Office of General Counsel. Reports state FHEO staffing has been cut by nearly 70% with severe changes to the number of attorneys focused on fair housing versus other HUD legal matters, a severe blow to HUD's capacity to safeguard the public's fair housing rights.

Federal laws and practice have historically limited political interference in civil rights enforcement. For example, the Fair Housing Act requires HUD to investigate all complaints that fall under relevant congressional statutes, and to issue a “charge” if the agency finds that discrimination has occurred.

Similarly, the Fair Housing Act specifies the process HUD must follow to resolve investigations, including pursuing voluntary conciliation (settlement), referral to the Office of Administrative Law Judges, and potentially referral to the Department of Justice (DOJ) for prosecution in court. The whistleblower complaint alleges that HUD has abandoned these required procedures, including denying the impacted individuals their right to have a say in the outcome of their case.

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*Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#) is the nation's first civil rights law organization. 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 Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF 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.*