

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

March 29, 2018

The Honorable Benjamin Carson  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
451 7<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Secretary Carson:

We are writing to express our deep concern that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is considering changing its mission statement from one that promotes inclusion and discrimination-free communities to one that does not strive to offer the same protections.

Much progress has been made in eliminating discriminatory practices that low-income homeowners and communities of color face. Rates of black homeownership today are lower than the national homeownership rate was during the Great Depression years of the 1930s. In 2016, the National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB) estimated that black homeownership was 41.7%, as compared to non-Hispanic white homeownership that same year at 71.5%.<sup>1</sup>

According to HUD's website, the department has played a leading role in administering the Fair Housing Act since its adoption, and subsequent amendments to the Act have only increased HUD's leadership position in this area.<sup>2</sup> Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (The Fair Housing Act), prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of dwellings on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

HUD must lead by example and commit to expand its work in eliminating housing discrimination, in which HUD has been a champion. These changes to the HUD mission statement would erase decades worth of progress and bring back an era in which people were denied housing based on the color of their skin.

We ask that HUD refrain from making any changes to its mission statement. We additionally ask that you ensure that HUD will continue to build inclusive and sustainable communities free from

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.responsiblelending.org/media/experts-warn-black-homeownership-endangered-primary-wealth-building-tool>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/fair\\_housing\\_equal\\_opp/progdesc/title8](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/progdesc/title8)

discrimination, and help hard working families pursue their American dream of safe, affordable, and inclusive housing.

We ask for a written response by Monday, April 9, 2018.

Sincerely,



U.S. Senator Kamala D. Harris



U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein



U.S. Representative Jared Huffman



U.S. Representative Jerry McNerney



U.S. Representative Mark DeSaulnier



U.S. Representative Barbara Lee



U.S. Representative Mike Thompson