



NHC Member Brief



Weekly update from the National Housing Conference

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National Housing Trust Campaign Media Organizer Taí Coates on the importance of storytelling:

"The playing field has changed for housing communicators like me. We can no longer exclusively rely on our canned political jargon, crafted for congressional members and staffers on the Hill – our audience is now much broader than that."

[Read more](#)

News from Washington | By Tristan Bréaux and Quinn Mulholland

Representatives debate OCC's CRA proposal

The House Financial Services Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Financial Institutions [held a hearing](#) on the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's (FDIC) recent Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPR) on the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), ahead of a full committee hearing on the proposal later this month. NHC President and CEO David Dworkin [submitted testimony](#) for the hearing, in addition to representatives from the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, UnidosUS, the California Reinvestment Coalition, the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation, and the National Diversity Coalition. At the hearing, many committee members underscored the need for CRA modernization, but several, including Subcommittee Chairman Gregory Meeks (D-N.Y.), expressed concern that the proposed rule would hurt, rather than help, low-income communities. However, Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-Mo.) said "the OCC and FDIC's proposed rule to amend and modernize the CRA would provide clarity and transparency by requiring regulators to develop and publish a list of pre-approved CRA activities, allowing banks to accurately assess and meet the needs of communities instead of waiting for an examiner to make a determination after the fact." On Wednesday, Committee Chairwoman Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) [announced](#) she was opening an investigation into efforts by special interest groups to influence the OCC and FDIC's rulemaking process.



“INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS A THREAT TO
JUSTICE EVERYWHERE.”

-Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Lawmakers discuss how to address homelessness

In [a House Financial Services Committee hearing](#) on Tuesday, representatives discussed how to address homelessness and the broader housing affordability crisis. The hearing featured testimony from several witnesses including National Housing Trust President and NHC Board of Governors member Priya Jayachandran, who emphasized the importance of affordable housing preservation in her testimony, saying, “focusing exclusively on new construction or vouchers without simultaneously promoting preservation risks exacerbating the problem.” In her opening statement, Chairwoman Waters [said](#), “We need to do more if we’re going to address the rental housing and homelessness crisis: we need to preserve the affordable housing that we have, and we need to increase investments in programs that develop new housing or provide rental assistance.” The same day, the Hill [held an event](#) on strategies to end homelessness featuring several other representatives, including Alan Lowenthal (D-Calif.), Danny K. Davis (D-Ill.), Joyce Beatty (D-Ohio), Lee Zeldin (R-N.Y.), and Rodney Davis (R-Ill.). The event also featured newly appointed U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness Executive Director Robert Marbut, who argued against a “housing first” approach to homelessness, and National Alliance to End Homelessness President and CEO and NHC Board of Governors member Nan Roman.

Trump administration ends delay on Puerto Rico disaster aid

In the wake of [a deadly earthquake](#) that wreaked havoc on the island, the Trump administration [finally released](#) the \$8.2 billion in disaster aid for Puerto Rico that it had been withholding for months. In [announcing the release](#) of the funding on Thursday, HUD said it will also publish a notice in the Federal Register to move forward with an additional \$8.3 billion in long-term mitigation funds for Puerto Rico, in addition to [appointing a Federal Financial Monitor](#) to oversee the disbursement of disaster aid. The delay in releasing this aid led to fierce criticism of the Trump administration from lawmakers and advocates, with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi [declaring on Wednesday](#) that “the ongoing withholding of funds appropriated by Congress to Puerto Rico is illegal.” The Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition, a coalition of over 850 organizations across the country including NHC, also [criticized the delay](#), and called for the immediate release of funds. After the Trump administration released the disaster aid on Wednesday, House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) and Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman David Price (D-N.C.) released [a joint statement](#), saying, “After broken promises, blown deadlines, and the illegal withholding of the Federal Register notice, HUD announced today that Puerto Ricans will finally have the opportunity to access the aid they so desperately need.”



Webinar: Outlook for the 2020 Housing Economy

#OurAmericanHome



Register for webinar!

Treasury watchdog investigating Opportunity Zones program

NBC News [reported](#) on Wednesday that Acting Treasury Inspector General Richard Delmar said that the department's internal watchdog has opened an inquiry into the Opportunity Zones program. The inquiry was spurred by [a letter](#) sent by Senator Cory Booker (D-N.J.) and Representatives Emanuel Cleaver (D-Mo.) and Ron Kind (D-Wisc.) to Inspector General Delmar in October of last year calling for an investigation into the Opportunity Zones program. It also comes in the wake of [several articles](#) raising questions about who benefits from the program. Federal regulators continue to work to generate investment in the program, with the Treasury Department [issuing](#) final regulations in December laying out what types of investments qualify for tax breaks and penalties for violating the rules and the Department of Transportation [launching](#) an interactive map earlier this month showing federal infrastructure projects in and around designated Opportunity Zones.

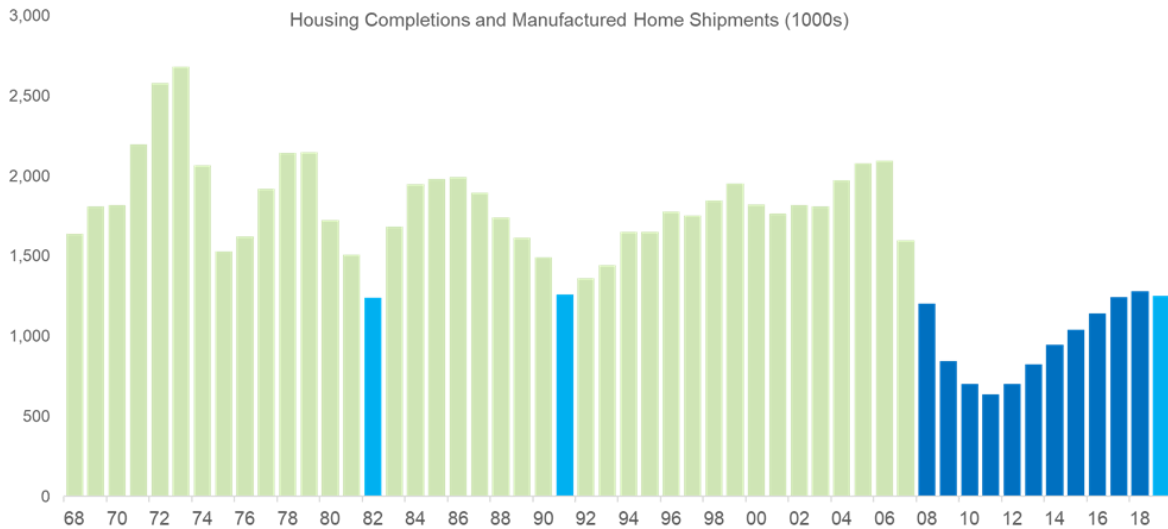
California lawmakers, governor take action on housing

California Governor Gavin Newsom and state legislators have had a busy start of the year, taking action on a range of housing-related issues. In addition to [requesting](#) \$1.4 billion in his budget proposal to the state legislature for programs to help the homeless, Newsom also [unveiled plans](#) for a state Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, modeled after the federal agency, which would police predatory lending, among other things. And on Monday, Newsom's homelessness task force [proposed a ballot measure](#) which, if approved by voters, would amend the state constitution to require local governments to take action to reduce homelessness and face punishment if they don't. State legislators have also been busy, proposing bills to [cap the state's home mortgage deduction](#), [declare a right to housing](#) and [allow homeless shelters and affordable housing to bypass environmental regulations](#). Perhaps the most high-profile housing-related bill in the legislature is state Sen. Scott Wiener's SB-50, which [he re-introduced with new changes this year](#), to allow for more housing near transit stations and job centers.

Chart of the Week

Housing supply continues to be far below historic levels

According to **Freddie Mac** economist Sam Khater, housing supply continues to be far below historic levels, despite recent improvements. This and other important data will be discussed in detail during NHC's webinar on the "Outlook for the 2020 Housing Economy" on Tuesday, January 21, at 2:00 pm. Details and registration information can be found [here](#).



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Department of Housing and Urban Development, Institute for Building Technology & Safety

What we're reading

A study published last year by the **Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia** found that minimum wage increases are associated with fewer renters defaulting on their lease contracts. The study also found, however, that this effect decreases over time as landlords increase rents to match wage increases. [Read the full study here.](#)

A longform article in the **Dallas Observer** spotlighted the story of Donna Pryor, a Dallas resident who moved to an affluent suburb with the help of a housing voucher and a special program that included counseling and covered moving costs. According to the article, HUD is preparing to expand the program that helped Pryor nationwide. [Read the article here.](#)

The **Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies** released a research paper on accessibility features for older households in subsidized housing on Monday. The paper found that older renters who rely on subsidies have significantly more mobility difficulties than non-subsidized renters, yet very few of them live in units that are currently accessible. [Read the full paper here.](#)

The week ahead

Tuesday, January 21

- [2020 NMHC Annual Meeting](#), Jan. 21-23
- [NHC webinar on the economic outlook for affordable housing in 2020](#), 2-3 p.m. ET

Wednesday, January 22

- [Enterprise Community Partners webinar on the 2020 Enterprise Green Communities Criteria](#), 3-4 p.m. ET

Thursday, January 23

- [MBA webinar on managing talent, diversity, and leadership in CRE finance](#), 2-3:30 p.m. ET

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The National Housing Conference has been defending the American Home since 1931. We believe everyone in America should have equal opportunity to live in a quality, affordable home in a thriving community. NHC convenes and collaborates with our diverse membership and the broader housing and

community development sectors to advance our policy, research and communications initiatives to effect positive change at the federal, state and local levels. Politically diverse and nonpartisan, NHC is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

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Defending our American Home since 1931

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National Housing Conference | 1900 M Street NW, Suite 550, Washington, DC 20036

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