



May 16, 2016

Dear Senator:

The National Housing Conference (NHC) supports efforts to create inclusive communities that provide affordable housing opportunities to all, and we ask you not to block the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) from implementing constructive policy improvements through its affirmatively furthering fair housing rule. **Please oppose amendments to the appropriations bills that would de-fund implementation of the affirmatively furthering fair housing rule.**

NHC supports HUD's efforts to empower communities to fulfill their obligations under the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Although the obligation to affirmatively further fair housing (AFFH) is long-standing, patterns of residential segregation have proved durable in many places. **The rule is an incremental improvement over previous administrative practice** by HUD to implement the obligations of the Fair Housing Act. It adds tools for communities, gives more clarity around obligations, and rolls out gradually.

The AFFH rule uses objective measures and publicly available data to evaluate policy choices from a local perspective. If done correctly, this should create more development opportunities for the private sector in places of opportunity, encourage more private investment in places of economic distress, and generate more affordable housing opportunity for people nationwide. HUD created tools to give communities data they can work with more easily, and it encourages communities to use additional local data to improve understanding of housing patterns in their jurisdiction. The rule includes a process for public participation to ensure all voices are heard.

There is an ongoing regulatory process of implementation and improvement. Communities will create an Assessment of Fair Housing on the same schedule that they would have followed to create an Analysis of Impediments (the previous planning requirement). A small number of communities have begun work already, which will provide an opportunity to field test the new process. Blocking implementation now by cutting the appropriations will not result in better implementation of the 1968 Fair Housing Act. Rather, **blocking appropriations for AFFH will reduce the ability of localities and states to pursue evidence-based policy guided by community input.** It will also leave HUD fewer options for dealing with dysfunctional patterns of segregated housing, possibly making enforcement action more frequent.

NHC therefore asks you to oppose amendments to the appropriations bills that would de-fund implementation of the affirmatively furthering fair housing rule.

About the National Housing Conference

The National Housing Conference (NHC) represents a diverse membership of housing stakeholders including tenant advocates, mortgage bankers, non-profit and for-profit home builders, property managers, policy practitioners, real estate professional, equity investors, and more, all of whom share a commitment to safe, decent and affordable housing for all in America. We are the nation's oldest housing advocacy organization, dedicated to the affordable housing mission since our founding in 1931. As a nonpartisan, 501(c) 3 nonprofit, we are a research and education resource working to advance housing policy at all levels of government in order to improve housing outcomes for all in this country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Chris Estes'.

Chris Estes
President and CEO