

Housing Advocates Condemn Trump Administration Racist Attack on Fair Housing, Call on California Policymakers to Implement New State Fair Housing Law



California Rural
Legal Assistance
Foundation

**PUBLIC
ADVOCATES**
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**HOUSING
CALIFORNIA**

Contact:

Sam Tepperman-Gelfant stepperman-gelfant@publicadvocates.org

Iris Murillo imurillo@housingca.org

Statement from California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, Housing California, Public Advocates, Western Center on Law & Poverty

Last week, in a transparently racist political move, the Trump Administration announced the intention to bury the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing provisions of the federal Fair Housing Act. The Act is a core victory of the Civil Rights era that requires the federal government, as well as states, cities, and housing agencies receiving HUD funding, to actively dismantle segregation and housing inequality. It is an anti-racist law meant to help undo the role the federal government has played in housing segregation. Recognizing the looming threat to this longstanding federal civil rights law, California added a rigorous Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing mandate to state law in 2018.

Housing inequality is a plague on California and the rest of the country, and it is a result of generations of intentional government and corporate policy and disinvestment. True housing justice in the United States can only be achieved when all levels of government and private sector actors devote as much energy and as many resources toward dismantling racist housing systems as they put into creating them.

Practically, the federal Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing requirement means that all government entities receiving HUD funding must analyze patterns of racial segregation and unequal access to housing for people of color, immigrants, people with disabilities, and other protected groups *and* take proactive steps to dismantle inequality. President Trump's new policy would remove accountability for officials and policymakers who make decisions that could further segregate our communities.

Civil rights leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King, John Lewis, C.T. Vivian, and thousands more dedicated their lives to promote the enactment of the Fair Housing Act to dismantle segregation. In 2015, the Obama administration implemented new Fair Housing regulations requiring even stronger action from local governments to promote racial justice through housing policies. Now, as a new generation fights for progress, the Trump Administration attempts to go backwards. This proposal would move the country even further away from the goals of equity that millions of Americans are demanding right now.

The urgent need for fair housing couldn't be more clear. A person's zip code can mean a difference of 20 years' life expectancy - Black and Brown lives are literally cut short because of racist housing policies. Many schools are more segregated now than they were before *Brown v. Board of Education*, largely because of segregated housing patterns.

Neighborhoods that people of color call home continue to be denied a fair share of public investment, while corporate real estate speculators force long-time residents from their homes; and wealthy suburbs continue to claim a disproportionate amount of public dollars as they exclude people of color.

Fortunately for the people of California, advocates fought for and won a new Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing requirement in 2018. Assembly Bill 686, authored by Miguel Santiago, adopts and expands federal Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing regulations in state law - requiring *all* state agencies, cities, counties, and housing authorities in California to analyze housing inequality and undertake steps to undo it in *all* activities relating to housing and community development.

We are committed to tearing down our own state's racist housing systems, and we call on our leaders in Congress to use their Congressional Review Act responsibilities to reject Trump's rule and direct HUD to get back to the work of tearing down barriers to equity nationwide. These disheartening federal actions also make it all the more urgent for officials at all levels of government in California to vigorously implement the state's requirement to affirmatively further fair housing.