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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND
URBAN AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6075

June 10, 2025

The Honorable Craig Trainor
Assistant Secretary-Designee, Department of
Housing and Urban Development
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Trainor:

On June 12, 2025, you will appear before the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs to discuss your nomination to serve as the Assistant Secretary of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). If confirmed, you will lead HUD's fair housing programs and enforcement of the Fair Housing Act and other civil rights laws¹ amid President Trump's efforts to decimate federal enforcement of our nation's civil rights laws. Please come to your hearing prepared to explain how you will ensure that everyone has access to fair and affordable housing, despite the Trump Administration's abject failure to protect Americans from housing discrimination.

It is illegal to discriminate in the sale or rental of housing, including against individuals seeking a mortgage or housing assistance, or in other housing-related activities, such as appraisals, marketing, tenant-screening, and evictions. The Fair Housing Act prohibits this discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), familial status, and disability.² According to data from the National Fair Housing Alliance, an estimated 34,000 fair housing complaints were made in 2023—the largest number on record.³

HUD plays a key role in enforcing our nation's fair housing and civil rights laws. More specifically, HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) is responsible for leading the nation in the enforcement, administration, development, and public understanding of

¹ Note: HUD also oversees compliance with and enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibit discrimination in housing and community development programs and activities.

² 42 U.S.C. § 3601 et seq.

³ National Fair Housing Alliance, "2024 Fair Housing Trends Report," July 10, 2024, <https://nationalfairhousing.org/resource/2024-fair-housing-trends-report/>; ProPublica, "How the Trump Administration is Weakening the Enforcement of Fair Housing Laws," Jesse Coburn, May 15, 2025, <https://www.propublica.org/article/trump-hud-weakening-enforcement-fair-housing-laws>.

fair housing laws and policies. Yet, since taking office, President Trump has worked to systemically undermine HUD's ability to do so. Since January 2025:

- HUD, in partnership with the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), terminated \$30 million in grants to 78 Fair Housing Initiative Program (FHIP) grantees across 33 states, stating that the grants, which support the enforcement efforts of local fair housing organizations, “no longer effectuate[] the program goals or agency priorities.”⁴
- HUD has delayed or dropped at least 115 fair housing cases.⁵
- HUD and DOGE efforts to cut the federal workforce have reduced FHEO staff by roughly one third—drastically diminishing supervision and enforcement capacity.⁶ Meanwhile, DOGE-implemented reforms now require HUD attorneys to “seek approval from a Trump appointee for basic tasks, such as issuing subpoenas” and prohibit HUD investigators from traveling “as staff credit cards now have \$1 spending limits,” further slowing investigations.⁷
- HUD eliminated individuals’ ability to submit fair housing complaints via email, mail, fax, over the phone, or in person (via walk-in) as part of regular complaint intake procedures, limiting people’s ability to seek recourse when facing discrimination.⁸
- HUD terminated its Affirmative Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) rule, which implemented a Fair Housing Act provision requiring the federal government and recipients of federal housing funding to proactively take steps to undo segregated and unequal patterns of housing and community development.⁹

⁴ National Fair Housing Alliance, “Relman Colfax and Fair Housing Advocates Ask Court to Halt HUD’s and DOGE’s Termination of Grants to Fight Housing Discrimination,” March 13, 2025, <https://nationalfairhousing.org/relman-colfax-and-fair-housing-advocates-ask-court-to-halt-huds-and-doges-termination-of-grants-to-fight-housing-discrimination/>; National Low Income Housing Coalition, “Four Fair Housing Groups Sue HUD and DOGE Over Canceling FHIP Contracts,” May 17, 2025, <https://nlihc.org/resource/four-fair-housing-groups-sue-hud-and-doge-over-canceling-fhip-contracts>; ProPublica, “How the Trump Administration is Weakening the Enforcement of Fair Housing Laws,” Jesse Coburn, May 15, 2025, <https://www.propublica.org/article/trump-hud-weakening-enforcement-fair-housing-laws>.

⁵ ProPublica, “How the Trump Administration is Weakening the Enforcement of Fair Housing Laws,” Jesse Coburn, May 15, 2025, <https://www.propublica.org/article/trump-hud-weakening-enforcement-fair-housing-laws>.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Washington Post, “HUD cuts might hamper government efforts to stop housing discrimination,” Rachel Siegel, April 6, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/04/06/fair-housing-enforcement-hud-cuts/>; *See also* Letter from Congressional Democrats to HUD Secretary Turner, March 17, 2025, https://democrats-financialservices.house.gov/uploadedfiles/b_dem_ltr_hud_re_fheo_oversight_3.17.25.pdf

⁹ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “Secretary Scott Turner Cuts Red Tape by Terminating AFFH Rule,”

- HUD terminated its Equal Access Rule, a 2016 regulation requiring grantees of funding through HUD’s Community Development and Planning programs to ensure equal access to housing for all people, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity, in accordance with the Supreme Court’s *Bostock* decision.¹⁰
- President Trump signed an Executive Order “Designating English as the Official Language of The United States,”¹¹ complicating enforcement of Fair Housing Act protections based on national origin, which extends to individuals with limited English proficiency.¹²
- President Trump issued an Executive Order (EO) entitled, “Restoring Equality of Opportunity and Meritocracy,” that directs Secretary Turner and other agency heads to “evaluate all pending proceedings [as well as existing consent judgments and permanent injunctions] that rely on theories of disparate-impact liability and take appropriate action with respect to such matters consistent with the policy of this order.”¹³ Disparate impact is a key tool to root out discriminatory effects in artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, which President Trump and Republicans are attempting to deregulate.¹⁴

Any one of these actions has the potential to hamper the enforcement of fair housing and civil rights laws—but taken together, the results have been immediate and harmful. HUD has rejected fair housing complaints involving sexual orientation, arguing that such complaints are not subject to the Fair Housing Act.¹⁵ Defendants in fair housing organizations are emboldened, allegedly ignoring correspondence from HUD investigators, looping DOGE employees into email traffic in the hopes that DOGE will intervene on their behalf, and walking away from

https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/hud_no_25_034#:~:text=WASHINGTON%20%2D%20Today%2C%20Secretary%20Scott%20Turner,to%20local%20and%20state%20governments.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “Secretary Scott Turner Halts Enforcement Actions of HUD’s Gender Identity Rule,” https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/hud_no_25_026.

¹¹ The White House, “Designating English as the Official Language of The United States,” March 1, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/designating-english-as-the-official-language-of-the-united-states/>.

¹² ProPublica, “How the Trump Administration is Weakening the Enforcement of Fair Housing Laws,” Jesse Coburn, May 15, 2025, <https://www.propublica.org/article/trump-hud-weakening-enforcement-fair-housing-laws>.

¹³ The White House, “Restoring Equality of Opportunity and Meritocracy,” Executive Order, April 23, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/04/restoring-equality-of-opportunity-and-meritocracy/>

¹⁴ Bloomberg Law, “Trump’s Disparate Impact Blow Makes AI Bias Claims Even Tougher,” Chris Marr, March 26, 2025, <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/daily-labor-report/trumps-disparate-impact-blow-makes-ai-bias-claims-even-tougher>; See also Elizabeth Warren, “Warren, Senators Press RealPage on Multi-Million Lobbying Campaign and House Republicans’ Provision Blocking States from Protecting Renters,” press release, May 29, 2025, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/warren-senators-press-realpage-on-multi-million-lobbying-campaign-and-house-republicans-provision-blocking-states-from-protecting-renters>

¹⁵ Letter from Congressional Democrats to HUD Secretary Turner, March 17, 2025, https://democrats-financialservices.house.gov/uploadedfiles/b_dem_ltr_hud_re_fheo_oversight_3.17.25.pdf; ProPublica, “How the Trump Administration is Weakening the Enforcement of Fair Housing Laws,” Jesse Coburn, May 15, 2025, <https://www.propublica.org/article/trump-hud-weakening-enforcement-fair-housing-laws>.

settlements. According to one HUD official, for violators “to face a consequence, they will need to be brought through a litigation process, which requires expenditure of litigation from the department, and they know that we don’t have those resources anymore.”¹⁶ As a result, “they... feel emboldened that this administration will not consider the things that they are doing to be illegal.”¹⁷

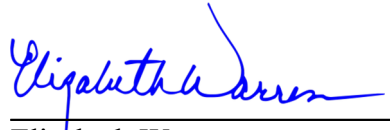
If confirmed, you will be responsible for running a decimated fair housing office on behalf of an Administration that has taken repeated steps to minimize, rather than enhance, the enforcement of fair housing laws. To help me better assess your fitness to serve as the Assistant Secretary of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, I ask that you come to your hearing prepared to answer the following questions:

1. Do you believe that all Americans deserve access to housing, regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), familial status, and disability?
2. Will you commit to advocating for a fully staffed, fully functional Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at HUD, even if doing so puts you at odds with other Administration officials?
3. Will you commit to reinstating and expanding communication lines between the public and HUD to make it easier, not harder, for potential victims of housing discrimination to file fair housing complaints with the Department?
4. Will you commit to reinstating FHIP grants to local fair housing organizations across the country?
5. Will you commit to enforcing the Fair Housing Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act to the fullest extent of the law?
6. Will you commit to preserving strong disparate-impact enforcement, including to root out discriminatory effects in the use of artificial intelligence technologies in the housing market?

Sincerely,

¹⁶ ProPublica, “How the Trump Administration is Weakening the Enforcement of Fair Housing Laws,” Jesse Coburn, May 15, 2025, <https://www.propublica.org/article/trump-hud-weakening-enforcement-fair-housing-laws>.

¹⁷ *Id.*



Elizabeth Warren
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Housing, and Urban Affairs