

Testimony of Adrienne Todman
Nominee to be Deputy Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
Before the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
May 11, 2021

Chairman Brown, Ranking Member Toomey, and Members of the Committee, I am deeply honored and humbled to appear before you today as the nominee for Deputy Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

I want to begin by thanking President Biden for the confidence and trust he has placed in me with my nomination for this position.

I would also like to thank my family for their unwavering support, patience, and love not just over the past several weeks, but always.

I have lived in Washington, D.C. for some years, and one of my favorite experiences is the sight of an enthusiastic group of students visiting the nation's capital for the first time. Their joy and awe remind me of my very first trip to this city as a teenager several decades ago as part of a weeklong education program on the federal government. I traveled here from the U.S. Virgin Islands — where I was born and raised — and I recall returning home inspired. That inspiration and my belief in the power of public service led me back to Washington, D.C. after college. I spent the early years of my career working in the office of Congressman Ron de Lugo, the delegate from the Virgin Islands, on matters important to families who lived there.

After my tenure on the Hill, I had the great fortune of joining the career staff in the Office of Public and Indian Housing at HUD. There, I helped stand up a new national program designed to revitalize distressed public housing units and provide self-sufficiency programs. Following that role, I became a policy aide in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing and later served in the Office of the Secretary, where my experience with HUD programs broadened as I worked with leaders from each programmatic area.

I also have years of experience as a local housing practitioner. During my tenure as Executive Director of the District of Columbia Housing Authority, I led efforts to preserve public housing units and expand youth-focused programs. I worked closely with private landlords to improve and streamline the tenant-based voucher program, and helped voucher-holders explore a variety of neighborhoods. I worked with homeless service providers and other organizations dedicated to serving vulnerable populations, such as young adults aging out of the foster care system, survivors of domestic abuse, and veterans experiencing homelessness. In addition, I worked with all stakeholders – from developers to lenders to community members – to build and manage new affordable housing units.

While leadership is paramount, sound management is critical. During my tenure at both the District of Columbia Housing Authority and the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, I worked to strengthen our business systems, ensure sound financial management, and provide staff the resources needed to effectively do their jobs. As a leader and a manager, I emphasized each person's importance to our mission, no matter their role.

My career in government and the nonprofit sector has been dedicated to improving people's lives and strengthening communities through housing. I have spoken with people across the country – in urban, suburban, and rural communities alike – and they all want the same thing: a fair shot. A fair shot to provide for their families, to secure a safe and stable home, and to get ahead.

Sadly, this is out of reach for far too many Americans, particularly people of color. Far too many among us have been denied access to resources and support to realize their aspirations and reach their full potential.

The past 14 months of the COVID-19 pandemic have underscored the necessity of having a stable, affordable home, and demonstrated the interconnection between housing, health, and opportunity.

We have a responsibility to confront housing insecurity and help ensure access to good homes. It is our responsibility to eliminate all forms of housing discrimination. And it is our responsibility to build our nation's housing infrastructure in a way that expands equitable access to housing for all people.

If confirmed, I will focus on immediate housing needs related to the pandemic and longer-term structural housing challenges to serve America's diverse communities in a way that is inclusive, equitable, and effective.

If confirmed, I commit to working with the Secretary to ensure that HUD has the staff and tools it needs to administer and provide oversight over programs critical to supporting families and moving the country forward. My actions would be guided by my years of management and housing experience and by the invaluable expertise of the Department's career staff. HUD's staff works every day to meet the housing needs of families and individuals throughout the country. If confirmed, it would be my honor to once again serve alongside them in carrying out HUD's mission to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I look forward to your questions.

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