



Testimony of Dana Wade

Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of Housing and Federal Housing Commissioner U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

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Chairman Crapo, Ranking Member Brown, and members of this Committee, thank you for inviting me here today to testify as the nominee for Federal Housing Commissioner and Assistant Secretary for Housing of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. I want to also thank President Trump for the privilege of being nominated for this position.

It is truly an honor to be here after serving as a staff member of this Committee and spending a good part of my career working for Senator Shelby on both the Banking and Appropriations Committees. I'm extremely grateful to him for such opportunities.

I'm also very thankful for the love and support of my wonderful family. I regret that both my husband, Chris, and our daughter, Mary, can only be here today in spirit, and not in person.

As I look around this hearing room, I see the Senate continuing the people's work but under very different circumstances. If confirmed, I will commit to do everything I can as FHA Commissioner to help the country emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic healthier, stronger, and with a more prosperous economy.

HUD and FHA play critical roles in our nation's safety net. That is more clear today than ever. Secretary Carson and the dedicated staff at HUD are working tirelessly to minimize the impact of COVID-19 to homeowners, renters, and the vulnerable populations HUD serves each and every day. We are grateful for the hard work and bipartisan commitment of Congress during this time in passing legislation that safeguards American families, communities, and the economy from this terrible virus.

I joined public service in the midst of a different crisis – the financial crisis of 2008 – during which I gained valuable experience that will serve me well if confirmed. I

learned that during times like these, it is important to make sure assistance quickly reaches those in need and that we maximize the effectiveness of every Federal dollar. As a staff member of the Budget, Banking and Appropriations Committees, as well as an Associate Director at the Office of Management and Budget, I drilled down into the details of multiple agencies and programs, giving them much-needed scrutiny to ensure that they fulfilled their missions and targeted support effectively. And as the acting head of FHA and HUD's Office of Housing, I implemented reforms that better-managed risk, built-up capital, and provided greater transparency to the public.

If confirmed, my priorities for FHA and the Office of Housing are as follows:

- First, protecting current FHA homeowners – those who are low-to-moderate income, including first-time and minority borrowers – as well as assisted renters who through no fault of their own have experienced COVID-related hardships. This includes executing CARES Act provisions like the eviction moratorium and forbearance for homeowners, as well as fully deploying FHA's loss mitigation toolkit for COVID-affected homeowners.
- Second, ensuring that FHA has the necessary staffing and other resources, as well as continuing the innovative FHA IT Modernization effort, which together will allow FHA to perform its important counter-cyclical role to support the housing market. One of the pillars of FHA's mission is to provide support when the economy demands it, especially if there is tightening in conventional and private markets.
- Third, vigilantly monitoring risk to taxpayers of losses stemming from COVID-19, and protecting FHA's capital reserve to the maximum extent possible. Losses in the current environment are inevitable, and FHA must be transparent to Congress and the American taxpayers when it comes to its financial position. Future policies should allow FHA to responsibly rebuild capital when the time is right, as this current crisis has reminded us of the importance of having a buffer to protect taxpayers from losses.

I believe that FHA has a duty to support the nation's housing markets and homeowners facing economic hardship. While the virus will pass and the economy will eventually regain its previous strength, the road to recovery will require our sustained effort.

If confirmed, I will do all that I can to run a strong, sustainable FHA and Office of Housing, one that can support the needs of those we serve and is accountable to the taxpayers who stand behind it. I look forward to working with this Committee and with Congress on these objectives and look forward to answering your questions.

Thank you.