

# National Week of Action Toolkit: Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

March 9 – 13, 2020

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) published on January 14 a proposed Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) rule that reverses a previous fair housing rule that aimed to address current and ongoing housing discrimination and segregation. The new proposal is not a fair housing rule. It considers housing that might be “affordable” to be the same as fair housing choice and represents another attempt by the Trump administration to undermine civil rights and affordable housing. **The deadline to comment on this proposed rule is March 16.**

The Fight for Housing Justice campaign invites you and those in your network to take action **March 9-13** and host events to push back on the proposed rule before the March 16 comment deadline.

Rally with other advocates from around the country by hosting comment parties, tweetstorms, or Facebook Live events. Circulate emails and pitch op-eds as a last collective effort before the comment period closes to let HUD know that we strongly oppose the changes to the AFFH rule.

Use and share the resources in this toolkit to engage more participation. Address questions to Lisa Marlow, National Low Income Housing Coalition manager, Media Relations and Communications, [lmalow@nlihc.org](mailto:lmalow@nlihc.org)

## Hosting a Comment Party

HUD must respond to each comment received, so we hope to generate as many unique comments from individuals and organizations as possible, slowing down the implementation of the rule and giving us more time for the litigation and legislative strategies. Hosting a commenting party can help engage your network and allow folks with limited access to the Internet an opportunity to share their opposition.

## TIPS FOR COMMENTING

- Make sure people know they should personalize their comment by adding at least one full paragraph of their own words for it to be counted.
- When commenting, highlight the connection you or your organization has to the issue and how the proposed rule could impact your community (or conversely, how actually implementing the 2015 AFFH rule could benefit your community).
- Advocates should utilize comment templates for additional talking points to help make their comments unique:
  - [General comment template for individuals and organizations](#)
  - [Comment Template for Legal Aid Advocates](#)
  - [Comment Template for Disability Advocates](#)
  - [Comment Template for Advocates Serving Survivors of Gender-Based Violence](#)

## LOGISTICAL TIPS FOR PLANNING A COMMENT PARTY

- Choose a block of time when people in your network and community are likely to be available to submit comments from home or from a specified, physical location. Comments may be submitted directly to HUD through the [Fight for Housing Justice](#) website by phone or laptop.
- If you're hosting an in-person commenting party, identify a location to host it at (i.e. your office, a community center, a bar or café, etc.).
- Make sure people have the resources they need to participate (i.e. links to the talking points, fact sheets, commenting template, and commenting portal).
- Make sure people know they should personalize their comment by adding at least one full paragraph of their own words for it to be counted.
- Having stations where participants can submit comments, receive refreshments, and take pictures can make the event more interactive!

## GETTING THE WORD OUT

- Set up and share a tool such as a Facebook event, Eventbrite, or Google Form to track registrants and interest. Include an explanation of the proposed rule, links to the resources and commenting portal, or if doing an in-person day, provide the location and time of the event.

- Publicize the event through emails and social media. Encourage other organizations to also publicize the event through their channels.
- On the day of the event, send reminders through social media and email.
- In order to track activity on social media, encourage use of #KeepHousingFair and #FightForHousingJustice in all communications.

## Sample Email

Keep your entire network informed through email. Plan to send one or two emails within the week. Email remains the most popular communication to garner high engagement rates and allows advocates to participate at their own convenience.

### Fair Housing is Under Attack! Join Efforts to Oppose Harmful Proposed Rule

The Trump administration published on January 14 a proposed rule to reverse efforts to undo historic and ongoing patterns of housing discrimination and segregation throughout the U.S. This is the latest of this administration's attacks on civil rights and affordable housing.

Advocates from around the country are rallying to oppose the proposed rule through the [Fight For Housing Justice campaign](#). **We urge all advocates to join us in submitting public comments opposing the rule before the March 16 deadline.**

#### Background

The Trump proposal would gut the landmark 2015 Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) Rule that provided guidance and tools to state and local governments and public housing agencies to help them better identify and address harmful patterns of segregation, discrimination, and disinvestment – patterns often created by government policy. The 2015 rule was developed over several years, with significant input from a wide variety of stakeholders.

The new “fair housing” rule absurdly ignores race, segregation and housing discrimination and incorrectly equates increased housing supply with fair housing choice. The proposal will not promote fair housing or affordable housing goals, and it attacks protections for tenants, workers, and the environment. HUD's proposed rule lacks meaningful oversight and accountability and eliminates opportunities for public input on AFFH plans.

#### Take Action

**Organizations and individuals should submit comments opposing the proposed rule by the March 16 deadline.**

Visit [www.FightForHousingJustice.org](http://www.FightForHousingJustice.org) to [submit a comment](#) and find [comment templates](#), [talking points](#), [summaries and analysis](#), and [other resources](#).

# Sample Op-Ed or Blog (word count 401)

An op-ed is a tool you can use to reach a wider audience outside of your network. Pay attention to the news cycle and identify traditional newspapers or online media platforms that designate consistent and balanced coverage to the issue of fair housing and civil rights. Pitch the outlet with an overview of the issue and why it would be important for their readers to learn more. Allow 2-3 days for a response. If you received a decline, pitch to another outlet. Do not pitch multiple outlets with the same article at the same time. Most outlets accept op-eds that are between 400-800 words.

Blogs are another great platform you can use to share stories on the importance of opposing the proposed changes to this rule. Invite another organization to cross-post a blog to double your reach.

Where you live determines a lot about how you live. Access to a safe and affordable home near quality schools, transportation, and jobs is basic to the American Dream and our nation's future. Where you live impacts the schools your children attend, the jobs available to you, the transportation system on which you rely, your access to grocery stores with healthy food, and a host of other factors.

The Fair Housing Act was passed in 1968 with the intent to help ensure that your choices about where to live are not limited by your race, ethnicity, religion, sex, family status or disability. The Fair Housing Act gave hope to families that they would be able to choose their neighborhoods and feel assured that they would have access to the resources and amenities they needed to flourish. The Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) mandate under the Fair Housing Act helps ensure that all people — regardless of race, ethnicity, family status or disability — have a range of choices about where to live, and that all neighborhoods are good places to live, regardless of the demographics of their residents.

The 2015 AFFH regulation was the first real guidance under the Act to help communities recognize and address barriers to fair housing. The rule, developed under the Obama Administration after five years of exhaustive outreach and input, was HUD's strongest effort in decades to reverse harmful patterns of segregation and discriminatory practices in communities across the country. Now, Secretary Carson wants to gut this critical rule.

At a time when the housing plight of Black Americans has in some ways worsened, housing discrimination for people in the LGBTQ+ and disability communities seems to become more normalized, the yawning racial wealth gap has widened, and Black homeownership has declined to levels below when discrimination was legal, the promise and obligations of the Fair Housing Act and HUD's mission to "create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all," are more important and urgent than ever.

We cannot allow these proposals to be implemented. The proposed rule is not a fair housing rule. It emphasizes increasing the supply of housing, conflating "affordable housing" with "fair housing choice." HUD should abandon this ill-conceived proposal, reinstitute the 2015 AFFH rule, and resume its implementation. Rather than attempting to weaken it, Secretary Carson must work to vigorously enforce the obligation to further fair housing in our country.

# Sample Social Media

Use sample content on social media, e.g. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, to elevate and join the conversation on the Fight for Fair Housing. Use #KeepHousingFair or #FightForHousingJustice in your posts. Also consider pairing your posts with social media graphics. Sample graphics can be downloaded at: <https://tinyurl.com/vq5fn2o> and <https://tinyurl.com/qw5ndtu>

- Where you live determines how you live. Everyone deserves access to safe & #affordablehousing near quality schools, transportation & jobs to achieve the American Dream. Fight back against @HUDGov's latest attack on the right of every person to a happy home <https://www.fightforhousingjustice.org/affh-comment>
- Do you want to see the Trump administration successfully gut civil rights protections for millions of people? If not, join the fight to #KeepHousingFair. Submit a comment opposing changes that would weaken the existing #AFFH rule <https://www.fightforhousingjustice.org/affh-comment>
- Why do we need the #AFFH tool? It's meant to end discriminatory housing practices & overcome the impacts of government-sponsored residential segregation that weaken our communities & undermine our prosperity. #KeepHousingFair Comment Today <https://www.fightforhousingjustice.org/affh-comment>
- We need to take a stand against @HUDgov's attempt to weaken civil rights protections & let communities receive HUD funds while they perpetuate housing discrimination & segregation. HUD's accepting comments now – send yours today <https://www.fightforhousingjustice.org/affh-comment> #KeepHousingFair
- .@HUDgov is accepting comments on its proposed #AFFH rule that would eliminate anti-segregation protections. Now is the time to make your voice heard and join the campaign to #KeepHousingFair <https://www.fightforhousingjustice.org/affh-comment>
- BREAKING: @HUDgov proposes rule that would eliminate #AFFH, a mandate for ensuring cities address systemic discrimination & segregation. Fight back to #KeepHousingFair <https://www.fightforhousingjustice.org/affh-comment>
- We're joining a coalition of advocates to #KeepHousingFair and fight the Trump administration's latest attack on core civil rights tools. Join us by commenting today <https://www.fightforhousingjustice.org/affh-comment>
- ALERT: @HUDgov has launched another attack on fair housing, announcing a rule that would allow communities to receive @HUDgov funding while perpetuating housing discrimination & segregation. This isn't right #KeepHousingFair by submitting a comment today <https://www.fightforhousingjustice.org/affh-comment>

- Help protect our neighborhoods from discrimination! Everyone should have a place to call home that connects them to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive. #KeepHousingFair submit a comment today <https://www.fightforhousingjustice.org/affh-comment>
- @HUDgov's new proposed rule would eliminate #AFFH entirely. It doesn't give jurisdictions & Public Housing Authorities the tools they need to identify and eliminate housing discrimination. It would perpetuate discrimination & segregation. Fight back <https://www.fightforhousingjustice.org/affh-comment>
- March 16 is the deadline to tell @HUDGov to #KeepHousingFair! Submit a comment to oppose its efforts to gut the #AFFH rule and tell @SecretaryCarson you will not stand for housing discrimination <https://www.fightforhousingjustice.org/affh-comment>
- It's not too late to fight for your housing rights and protect our ability to combat decades of segregationist and discriminatory policies. March 16 is the deadline to submit your comment to @HUDGov and help us #KeepHousingFair <https://www.fightforhousingjustice.org/affh-comment>
- March 16 is fast approaching! Time is running out to submit public comments to @HUDgov opposing its attack on the #AFFH rule. Don't miss out on your opportunity to #KeepHousingFair and comment TODAY <https://www.fightforhousingjustice.org/affh-comment>
- #ICYMI The Trump administration is attacking your civil rights protections — and March 16 is the deadline to fight back. Protect the #AFFH rule and #KeepHousingFair submit your comments today <https://www.fightforhousingjustice.org/affh-comment>

## National Events

Join the National Low Income Housing Coalition, National Fair Housing Alliance, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and the National Housing Law Project hosted events during this Week of Action. Participate, spread the word, and be inspired to do your own action/event.

- March 9, 5pm – 6:30pmET: NLIHC & NHLP co-host a [comment party](#) at the NLIHC office
- March 10, 2pm – 2:30pmET: CBPP hosts a [Facebook Live event](#)
- March 12, 2pm – 2:30pmET: NFHA hosts a [Facebook Live event](#)
- March 13, 1pm – 2pmET: NLIHC hosts a tweetstorm

## Additional Resources

- [About HUD's Proposed Rule](#)
- [Fact Sheets, Talking Points, and Summaries](#)
- [Commenting Templates](#)
- [Commenting Portal](#)
- [Social media toolkit](#)

- Take pictures and post them on social media using #KeepHousingFair or #FightForHousingJustice.
- [See if your members of Congress](#) have publicly opposed the proposed AFFH rule. If you do not see your member, contact them and urge them to voice their opposition to this proposal.

Contacts:

Lisa Marlow, NLIHC manager, Media Relations and Communications [lmарlow@nlihc.org](mailto:lmарlow@nlihc.org)

Sonya Acosta, NLIHC policy analyst [sacosta@nlihc.org](mailto:sacosta@nlihc.org)



National Low Income Housing Coalition | [www.nlihc.org](http://www.nlihc.org) | National Housing Law Project | [www.nhlp.org](http://www.nhlp.org)

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**#KEEPOUSINGFAIR**