



**National
Urban League**

*Empowering Communities.
Changing Lives.*

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March 7, 2018

The Honorable Ben Carson
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Mr. Secretary,

It is with the utmost urgency I respectfully implore you to reject removal of anti-discrimination language from your department's mission statement.

In signing the legislation that created the Department of Housing and Urban Development, President Lyndon Johnson said, "We must make sure that every family in America lives in a home of dignity and a neighborhood of pride, a community of opportunity and a city of promise and hope." Without an affirmative commitment to "inclusive and sustainable communities, free from discrimination," Johnson's vision simply cannot be achieved.

You have spoken of the squalid conditions of your childhood neighborhood in Boston; you have experienced first-hand the demoralizing wounds of segregation and racism, and for a time, according to your spokesman, benefitted from the safety net of housing subsidy. You must bring these experiences to bear in your responsibility to uphold the duties of your office.

A drastic change to the department's mission statement is a move that should not be made lightly, or in haste. Before accepting this change, you must confer with your staff in the field, and HUD stakeholders, who must live with the consequences of your actions.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act, proposed and passed in part in reaction to the findings of the Kerner Commission: that the United States was "moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal," and that the status quo would result in two separate societies: "one, largely Negro and poor, located in the central cities; the other, predominantly white and affluent, located in the suburbs."

I fear the future envisioned by the Kerner Commission may become a reality if you allow the mission of HUD to be diluted. As the National Urban League is deeply committed to fair and affordable housing for

every American, we look forward to sharing our input and assistance as your department seeks to refine its mission.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "marc morial". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Marc H. Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League