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NLIHC Leadership Reception and Housing Policy Forum

Register Today for April 5 Leadership Awards Reception Honoring Barbara Lee and Nancy Bernstine

Join us on April 5, 6-8 pm, at the Washington Court Hotel in Washington DC to celebrate the contributions of U.S. Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA) and Nancy Bernstine at the 2016 NLIHC Leadership Awards will receive the 2016 Edward W. Brooke Housing Leadership Award for being a forceful progressive voice in Congress for social, economic, and housing justice on behalf of the most vulnerable in her district and nationwide, and especially for her early, consistent, and vocal leadership on the National Housing Trust Fund. Ms. Bernstine will receive the 2016 Cushing N. Dolbeare Lifetime Service Award in recognition of her many years of affordable housing advocacy as executive director of the National AIDS Housing Coalition, NLIHC board member, and policy leader at the National Housing Law Project and the McAuley Institute.

To register for the Leadership Reception and make a contribution on behalf of this year's awardees, go to: <http://nlihc.org/events/leadership/registration>.

NLIHC's 2016 Housing Policy Forum on April 3-5 is almost sold-out. **Register today** to get one of the few remaining spaces.

This year's Policy Forum will feature HUD Secretary Julián Castro, U.S. Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA), former U.S. Representative Barney Frank, author Kathryn Edin, *Washington Post* writer Emily Badger, and many others. The Forum will also be an opportunity to celebrate the leadership of long-time NLIHC President and CEO Sheila Crowley, who is retiring in April, and to welcome the Coalition's incoming President and CEO Diane Yentel.

Featured sessions at this year's Policy Forum include:

- HUD Priorities for 2016 and Beyond with HUD Secretary Julián Castro;
- Housing and Criminal Justice Reform with U.S. Senator Tim Kaine (VA-D);
- Extreme Poverty in the United States: Surviving on the Edge with Next to Nothing with Kathryn Edin the author of *\$2 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*;
- Discussion on the findings from *The Family Options Study: Short-Term Impacts of Housing and Services Interventions for Homeless Families*, with the report's lead researcher, Marybeth Shinn;
- Housing in the Media with *Washington Post* writer, Emily Badger;
- Affordable Housing Past, Present and Future with NLIHC President and CEO Sheila Crowley and Incoming NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel;
- Housing and the 2016 Elections;
- Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing;
- National Housing Trust Fund Implementation;
- A Dinner Celebration of Retiring NLIHC President and CEO Sheila Crowley with former U.S. Representative Barney Frank;
- Resident Session on Section 3, RAD, and the preservation-mobility balance under AFFH;
- And more.

To register for the Forum, go to: <http://nlihcforum.org/>

Federal Budget

House Budget Committee Passes FY17 Resolution, Further Action Questionable

At the end of a nine-hour mark-up on March 16, the House Budget Committee passed an FY17 budget resolution by a vote of 20-16. All 14 Democrats and two Republican members of the ultra-conservative Freedom Caucus opposed the resolution.

By week's end, the prospects of taking the resolution to the full House were dim as it is unlikely to get past both Democratic and Freedom Caucus objections. Media reports indicate that the Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-WI) may forego any consideration of an FY17 budget resolution altogether and simply move to annual appropriations without any enforceable spending limits. In fact, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs is scheduled to mark-up its FY17 appropriations bill on March 23.

The FY17 resolution as passed continues to include the \$30 billion in increased discretionary funding (sequester relief) provided for in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, but makes drastic cuts to both mandatory and non-defense discretionary programs in the future. In its budget narrative, the committee is particularly critical of anti-poverty programs and cites HUD as having 22 duplicative programs. The CDBG program comes in for particular criticism for its "far-flung mission (that) reduces the program's effectiveness and duplicates other programs that HUD or other agencies already operate." On the other hand, the narrative applauds the greater flexibility that Moving to Work affords public housing agencies.

Read the proposed FY17 House budget resolution at

http://budget.house.gov/uploadedfiles/fy2017_a_balanced_budget_for_a_stronger_america.pdf.

Representative Waters Urges Increased Funding for Federal Housing Programs in FY17

On March 18, House Financial Services Committee Ranking Member Maxine Water (D-CA) sent four separate letters to House appropriators urging them to provide increased funding in FY17 for federal housing programs that serve America's most vulnerable populations.

The first letter asks that appropriators provide the full \$2.66 billion requested in President Barack Obama's FY17 budget for the McKinney-Vento programs, as well as an additional \$5 billion in emergency spending for the program to address the rise of homelessness in major metropolitan areas. Representative Waters writes, "In the richest country in the world, it is simply unconscionable that 564,708 of our neighbors across the country are living without a place to call home. Major metropolitan areas in particular are struggling to address recent increases in their homeless populations."

In another letter, Ms. Waters and Representative Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO), along with 69 of their colleagues, request that appropriators provide more money for HUD housing programs that serve low income families, seniors, and people with disabilities. This includes more than \$10 billion for public housing, more than \$30 billion for Section 8 rental assistance programs and almost \$800 million for programs that serve the elderly and people with disabilities. The letter states, "Federal housing assistance is essential for providing safe, decent and affordable housing for our nation's most vulnerable populations, including the elderly and persons with disabilities. With an aging population, and many communities still struggling to recover from the housing crisis, our federal housing assistance programs should be a top priority in the fiscal year 17 appropriations bill."

Additionally, Ms. Waters and Mr. Cleaver led a request, signed by 14 other lawmakers, to increase funding and make programmatic changes to rural housing programs under the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), including the Rural Development Voucher Program, Section 515 Rental Housing Loans, Section 514 Farm Labor Housing Loans, and the Multifamily Preservation and Revitalization Demonstration program. The

request states that these changes “will help protect vulnerable tenants by ensuring that vouchers and other resources are available, and by investing in the preservation of aging Section 515 and 514 properties.”

Finally, Ms. Waters was joined by almost 140 colleagues in requesting at least \$3.3 billion in funding for the Community Development Block Grant program. The letter states, “CDBG makes its way into the local economy through an extensive network of local organizations and remains a lifeline for families and communities.”

Read the letters and Ms. Water’s press release at: <http://1.usa.gov/1RpQkfD>

HUD Inspector General Testifies before House Appropriations Panel, Critical of MTW

On March 15, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies held a hearing on the budget requests for Offices of Inspector General (OIG) for HUD and the Department of Transportation (DOT). HUD Inspector General David Montoya and DOT Inspector General Calvin Scovel testified.

Mr. Montoya praised HUD Secretary Julián Castro for his responsiveness and willingness to partner with the OIG, but said that HUD’s audit problems stem from lack of staff expertise in financial management and accounting. He said that while there have been improvements within the agency, HUD was too slow to implement recommendations and respond to concerns made by his office. He also said that HUD’s slowness in filling key staff positions contributed to the problem and poses particular cause for concern as 43% of HUD’s staff are eligible for retirement.

Representative Henry Cuellar (D-TX) asked Mr. Montoya how the Subcommittee should measure performance outcomes of federal programs to ensure they are producing results. Mr. Montoya pointed to the Moving to Work program as a prime example of a program that has failed to be evaluated for its impact. He said, “For the last 20 years, there have been 39 public housing authorities in the Moving to Work program, which allows for locally innovative new ways of performing housing and self-sufficiency and these sorts of things. The problem is that in 20 years, they have never had a performance measure and I don’t think that we’ve ever had one as an example of what exactly came from this program that basically has a lot less rules and a lot more flexibility to it. And yet Congress has just expanded it. We have serious concerns that that’s ever going to be successful. Quite frankly, out of the 39 Moving to Work housing authorities that have been in the program, we’ve investigated five of them under at least 23 different investigations for abuse, fraud, [and] mismanagement of the program because of the lack of oversight that the department has provided.”

Representative David Young (R-IA) raised concerns about over-income tenants living in public housing and the “lack of desire” by HUD to do anything about it. Mr. Montoya responded, “What we’ve seen on the over-income, and what I want to make sure we’re clear on, is that these public housing authorities have had the authority since at least 2004 to remove those high-income earners from public housing. Often we heard that the reason that they haven’t done it is because to do that takes away from the additional rent that they’re able to make off the higher salaried families. So it’s a choice. The other thing we’ve heard is that they don’t believe they have the authority to do so, although we feel that they do.”

Watch the archived webcast and read hearing testimony at: <http://1.usa.gov/1QUCSNA>

USDA's Rural Development Programs Scrutinized during Budget Hearing

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on USDA's Rural Development (RD) programs on March 15. Undersecretary for Rural Development Lisa Mensah and Administrator for the Rural Housing Service (RHS) Tony Hernandez testified about the Administration's FY17 proposals for rural housing programs.

In his opening remarks, Subcommittee Chair Robert Aderholt (R-AL) stated that RD's budget request, \$58 million above the FY16 enacted level, includes new and untested programs that divert funds from existing programs that are proven to be effective. He also voiced concern for the increasing percentage of RD's budget that is consumed by the rental assistance account. "While recognizing that the need for affordable rural housing is great, the current cost growth, 25% increase since fiscal year 2014, is not sustainable without considering reductions to other programs," Mr. Aderholt said. "We would like to discuss measures the Department can take to control costs with the rental assistance program. We wish to work with Rural Development to find solutions that will control costs while serving those individuals with the greatest need and retaining a strong portfolio."

Several lawmakers addressed the shortfall in RD rental assistance funds that required House and Senate appropriators to come up with a short-term fix in the FY16 Omnibus (see *Memo*, [12/21/15](#)). USDA's FY17 request includes \$1.4 billion for rental assistance, but Mr. Aderholt said fewer housing contracts would be covered.

Both Ms. Mensah and Mr. Hernandez assured the Subcommittee that steps had been taken to better determine program costs. Instead of using a three-year statewide average, RD's obligation tool now will collect information at the local level to more precisely determine property-by-property program costs.

Mr. Hernandez warned that the bigger issue is the fact that many RD properties have maturing mortgages and will be lost if proactive steps are not taken. He said that RD is currently working to incentivize current RD property owners to transfer ownership to nonprofit organizations who have partnered with RD. He also said that the Subcommittee needs to be thinking about new construction, since many RD properties tend to be older buildings. Finally, Mr. Hernandez said there needs to be a change in the law to ensure tenants living in RD properties with maturing mortgages are protected if property owners decide to leave the program. The RD budget request seeks to expand eligibility for multi-family vouchers to tenants of Section 515 properties with maturing mortgages. Currently, only tenants of Section 515 properties with mortgages that are prepaid receive such vouchers.

Watch the archived webcast and read hearing testimony at: <http://1.usa.gov/22oT3v2>

Congress

Senators Collins and Reed Introduce Legislation to Update HOPWA Funding Formula

On March 10, Senate Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee Chair Susan Collins (R-ME) and Ranking Member Jack Reed (D-RI) introduced a bill (S. 2668) to update and improve the funding formula for HUD's Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program to better target resources to people living with HIV/AIDS.

S. 2668 would change the formulas so that HUD counts people living with HIV/AIDS rather than cumulative AIDS cases to determine how program funds are allocated to cities, states and nonprofit organizations. Currently, HOPWA funds are distributed based on cumulative AIDS cases that date back to 1981—55% of which are people who have died. This formula change will allow jurisdictions with increasing populations of people living with HIV/AIDS to receive more funding.

“The HOPWA Program is vital to ensuring that individuals living with HIV/AIDS, who have an elevated risk of becoming homeless, are able to access safe and affordable housing,” said Senator Collins. “The current method for distributing HOPWA Program funds is unfair to the regions of our country where individuals are feeling the effects of HIV/AIDS most acutely. Revising this outdated formula will allow these funds to benefit low-income individuals living with this illness and their families, precisely the population this program is intended to help.”

“HOPWA provides housing stability to help HIV-positive residents stay healthy. Medication is extremely expensive, and having a roof over their head enables people to better manage the disease, reduces the risk of HIV transmission, and results in better public health outcomes,” said Senator Reed. “We need to strengthen HOPWA, but the current formula shortchanges the most vulnerable. This bill provides a fairer and more accurate formula to meet the needs of those who really need assistance now and in the future.”

A similar bill (H.R. 4704) had previously been introduced in the House by Representatives David Price (D-NC) and Robert Aderholt (R-AL).

S. 2668 has been referred to the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. Senators Mark Kirk (R-IL), Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Brian Schatz (D-HI) have also cosponsored the bill.

Learn more about the bill at: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/2668>

Read Senator Reed’s press release is at: <http://www.reed.senate.gov/news/releases/collins-reed-introduce-bill-to-improve-housing-opportunities-for-persons-with-aids-hopwa-formula>

Housing Advocates Urge Senate Passage of Broad Housing Reform Bill

On March 16, NLIHC joined more than 30 national organizations in sending a letter to Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee Chair Richard Shelby (R-AL) and Ranking Member Sherrod Brown (D-OH), urging Senate passage of the “Housing Opportunities Through Modernization Act” (H.R. 3700). The House passed H.R. 3700 unanimously on February 2, 2016.

The letter states, “Our nation faces tremendous housing needs. This legislation is an important step forward to address a number of significant items which have enjoyed broad consensus over the years. There is more to be done to address housing and community development needs, but H.R. 3700 represents solid progress in the right direction. If enacted, this bipartisan bill would build on the effectiveness of federal rental assistance while achieving some modest savings.”

H.R. 3700 would make several important changes to the operation of housing assistance programs, including:

- Improving the project-basing of vouchers to increase housing options while ensuring choice;
- Changing income reviews to allow residents to keep onto increased earnings for longer periods;
- Imposing housing assistance limits for households with incomes above 120% of the poverty level;
- Streamlining income deductions, while requiring hardship exemptions for negatively impacted families;
- Allowing for expedited inspection processes for units to be rented to families and individuals with vouchers; and
- Updating the Housing for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) distribution formula.

Read the letter here: http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/HR3700_group_support_031616.pdf

Hearing on Government Regulations and High Cost of Housing Set

The House Financial Services Committee will hold a hearing titled *The Future of Housing in America: Government Regulations and the High Cost of Housing*. Witnesses include:

- Vicki Been, New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development
- Jayar Daily, American Homestar Corporation
- Mechele Dickerson, University of Texas at Austin School of Law
- Clyde Holland, Holland Partner Group

The hearing will be held on March 22 at 2pm ET in room 2128 of the Rayburn House Office Building.

To learn more about the hearing, go to:

<http://financialservices.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=400463>

Hearing to be Held on Tax Reform Proposals

The House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Tax Policy will hold a hearing on Member proposals relating to fundamental reform of the income tax system.

The hearing will be held on March 22 at 2:30pm ET in Longworth House Office Building room 1100.

For more information about the hearing, go to: <http://waysandmeans.house.gov/event/39841312/>

Congressional Briefing on HIV/AIDS Housing Scheduled

The National AIDS Housing Coalition will host a congressional briefing sponsored by Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Representative Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) to discuss national policy issues around housing for persons living with HIV/AIDS, including funding priorities and the impact of housing interventions.

The briefing will be held on April 7, 2016, at 10:30am ET in room SVC-202 of the U.S. Capitol Visitors Center. To attend, please RSVP to nahc@nationalaidshousing.org.

Congressional Briefing on Early Childhood Homelessness

On March 30, the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth will host a congressional briefing sponsored by Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and Representative Bobby Scott (D-VA) to provide an overview of early childhood homelessness and innovative ways communities and states are increasing homeless children's access to quality early childhood programs.

Speakers are:

- Barbara Duffield, National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
- Linda K. Smith, Office of Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families
- Carie Bires, Ounce of Prevention Fund, Chicago, IL
- Kresta Horn, UMOM New Day Centers; Phoenix, AZ
- Khari Garvin, Great Expectations Initiative; Forsyth County, NC

The briefing will be held at 10:00am ET in Dirksen Senate Office Building room 430. Register for the event at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JXVFRH3>

HUD

Baltimore County Fair Housing Settlement to Address Racial and Economic Segregation

The Baltimore County Branch of the NAACP, Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc., and three individuals filed a complaint with HUD on November 22, 2011 alleging that Baltimore County developed housing only in areas with high concentrations of racial minorities and poverty. They also claimed the County provided affordable rental housing only for seniors and not for families with children. A Conciliation Agreement and Voluntary Compliance Agreement were reached on March 7.

The agreement requires the County to commit at least \$3 million in County funds annually for ten years to create no fewer than 1,000 affordable housing units. These units must be in specific census tracts that have low numbers of subsidized housing units, low poverty, strong schools, access to jobs, and other measures of opportunity. Of the 1,000 units:

- At least 300 units must be affordable and occupied by families with children and non-elderly families with income less than 30% of the area median income (AMI). At least 150 of these must be developed through new construction or substantial rehabilitation;
- At least 700 units must be affordable and occupied by families with children and non-elderly families with income less than 60% AMI. At least 650 of these must be developed through new construction or substantial rehabilitation;
- At least 500 units must have three or more bedrooms;
- At least one-third of the properties where these units are located must comply with the design and construction requirements for covered multifamily units outlined under the Fair Housing Act;
- At least 100 units will be accessible and in a range of bedroom sizes throughout the specified census tracts, with no more than ten accessible units developed in a given census tract;
- No units will be in a standalone permanent supportive housing project. Units financed with permanent supportive housing funds will count toward the settlement only if they are fully integrated in developments that have at least 85% of the units not financed with permanent supportive housing funds;
- All units must have deed restrictions to ensure they remain affordable and occupied by eligible households for a minimum of 15 years; and
- All units must have a contractual agreement requiring owners and operators not to discriminate against a tenant or applicant who has a voucher or other public subsidy.

The agreement also calls on the County to operate a Mobility Counseling Program which will provide at least 2,000 families with vouchers over ten years, enabling them to move to specified high-opportunity census tracts. The County will provide \$300,000 annually for ten years to fund structural modifications so that other affordable housing units are accessible to people with disabilities.

County Executive Kevin Kamenetz (D) will submit and promote to the County Council legislation prohibiting housing discrimination based on source of income. The legislation must be substantially similar to model language in the agreement. In addition, the County agrees to modify several policies. For example, the County has already eliminated language requiring developers to obtain evidence of support for a residential rental housing development from any County Council member prior to moving forward on a project.

The agreement is at: <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=Xerox-031416.pdf>

FHFA

NLIHC Submits Comments on Proposed Rule on Fannie and Freddie's Duty-to-Serve

On March 17, NLIHC submitted comments responding to the Federal Housing Finance Agency's (FHFA) proposed rule detailing Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac's duty-to-serve (DTS) underserved markets required by the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008.

Under the proposed rule, the government-sponsored entities (GSEs) would be required to serve three specific underserved markets: manufactured housing, affordable housing preservation, and rural markets. The proposed rule requires the GSEs to submit plans for improving the "distribution and availability of mortgage financing in a safe and sound manner for residential properties that serve very low-, low-, and moderate-income families."

NLIHC's comments state, "The Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008) included provisions requiring the Enterprises to serve undeserved markets, as well as contribute to the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF) and Capital Magnet Fund (CMF), and meet certain affordable housing goals. Together, these requirements have the potential to serve as an important tool in addressing America's growing rental crisis."

NLIHC's comments make several recommendations to strengthen and improve the rule including:

- Allowing the GSEs to receive DTS credit for supporting new construction that preserves subsidies of existing affordable rental housing units,
- Ensuring GSEs develop products and underwriting guidelines that are compatible with federal housing programs that serve extremely low income families,
- Advising FHFA not to allow the GSEs to reenter the Low Income Housing Tax Credit investment market unless changes in market conditions necessitate their participation,
- Requiring the GSEs to support activities that not only promote residential economic diversity but also promote residential racial and ethnic diversity, and
- Encouraging the GSEs to support activities that would prevent the displacement of residents living in gentrifying communities.

NLIHC also endorsed the comments of the Housing Assistance Council and the National Manufactured Home Owners Association in regard to the GSEs' DTS rural and manufactured housing markets.

Read NLIHC's comments at: <http://bit.ly/1pQoyg9>

Read the proposed rule at: <http://1.usa.gov/258KoM5>

Housing and the Elections

Webinar on Educating Voters and Candidates on Housing Issues, April 18

The second webinar in NLIHC's 2016 Voterization series, "Educating Voters and Candidates on Housing Issues," will be held on Monday, April 18 at 2:00pm ET. The webinar will provide detailed information on creating voter guides, participating in candidate forums, and getting candidates to take positions on issues through candidate questionnaires. If you missed the first webinar in our series covering voter registration and

voter suppression, you can find a recording of the presentation and a copy of the slides at <http://nlihc.org/library/voterization>.

Throughout 2016 election season, NLIHC will offer webinars and resources to train advocates and service providers on how to carry out non-partisan voter engagement efforts with low income residents and their allies.

Strong low income resident participation in the 2016 elections is essential to get candidates to address the issue of affordable rental housing in their campaigns. Learn how to make that happen. RSVP at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1720412813737134082>

For questions, contact the field team at outreach@nlihc.org.

Research

Wage Inequality Continues 35-Year Rise

A report by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) titled *Wage Inequality Continued its 35-year Rise in 2015* shows that real hourly wages in America increased from 2014 to 2015 by 2.1% only because of a sharp decline in inflation. Nominal wages have not increased and wage inequality continues to grow.

The wage gap between the top income earners and those in the rest of the income distribution has increased dramatically since 2000, while the gap between the middle and bottom earners has remained relatively stable. In 2015, the wage ratio between the highest wage workers (95th percentile) and the lowest wage workers (10th percentile) was 6.3, compared to 6.2 in 2014 and 5.5 in 2000. The wage ratio between middle wage workers (50th percentile) and the lowest wage workers was 1.9 in both 2015 and 2000.

The report also examined wage inequality by gender. The lowest wage female workers have made wage gains relative to the lowest wage men, while the highest wage female workers have lost ground relative to their male counterparts. Between 2000 and 2015, the lowest income women's wages as a share of the lowest income men's wages increased from 87.3% to 92.2%, while the highest income women's wages decreased from 75.6% to 73% relative to those of highest income men. Between 2014 and 2015, the lowest income female workers gained 1.3% in wages relative to the lowest income men's wages, while the highest wage female workers lost 5.6% relative to their male counterparts. The growth in wages for the lowest wage female workers can largely be attributed to state-level increases in the minimum wage. The lowest income women experienced an absolute increase of 5.2% in wages in states that increased the minimum wage compared to a 3.1% increase in states without increases.

White, black and Hispanic workers saw real wage growth between 2014 and 2015 at all wage levels. However, there is a long-term trend of increasing disparities in wage growth among black and Hispanic workers relative to white workers. Between 2000 and 2015, the lowest income black workers' wages declined 2.2% relative to the wages of their white counterparts. The highest income black workers' wages declined 3.7% relative to those of the highest income white workers. Among Hispanic workers the disparity grew at the highest end of the income scale, but not at the lowest. Hispanic workers' wages relative to white workers' wages grew 5.9% among the lowest wage earners, but declined 5.5% among the highest wage earners.

EPI utilized data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the EPI Minimum Wage Tracker, and the Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Group microdata for its analysis.

Wage Inequality Continued its 35-year Rise in 2015 can be found at <http://bit.ly/1Mn16fj>.

Quality of Where People Live after Incarceration Varies by Race

A research brief from the University of Wisconsin's Institute for Research on Poverty titled *How does incarceration affect where people live after prison, and does it vary by race?* reports that after incarceration, white ex-inmates tend to relocate to more disadvantaged neighborhoods than they lived in before prison. Black and Hispanic ex-inmates do not move to more disadvantaged neighborhoods, but on average live in significantly worse neighborhoods before and after prison than white ex-inmates.

The study is based on data collected from a biennial survey that began in 1979 with a group of 12,686 individuals who were between the ages of 14 and 22 years of age when the survey began. Neighborhood quality was based on characteristics typically associated with socioeconomic disadvantage: poverty, joblessness, female-headed families, and receipt of public assistance. These data came from the U.S. Census.

Black and Hispanic ex-inmates lived in significantly more disadvantaged neighborhoods before and after prison than white ex-inmates. The typical white ex-inmate's pre-prison neighborhood was better than the average neighborhood. White ex-inmates' average post-prison neighborhood was still better than average but to a significantly lesser extent. The typical black and Hispanic ex-inmate's pre-prison neighborhood was more disadvantaged than the average neighborhood, and they relocated after prison to similarly disadvantaged neighborhoods.

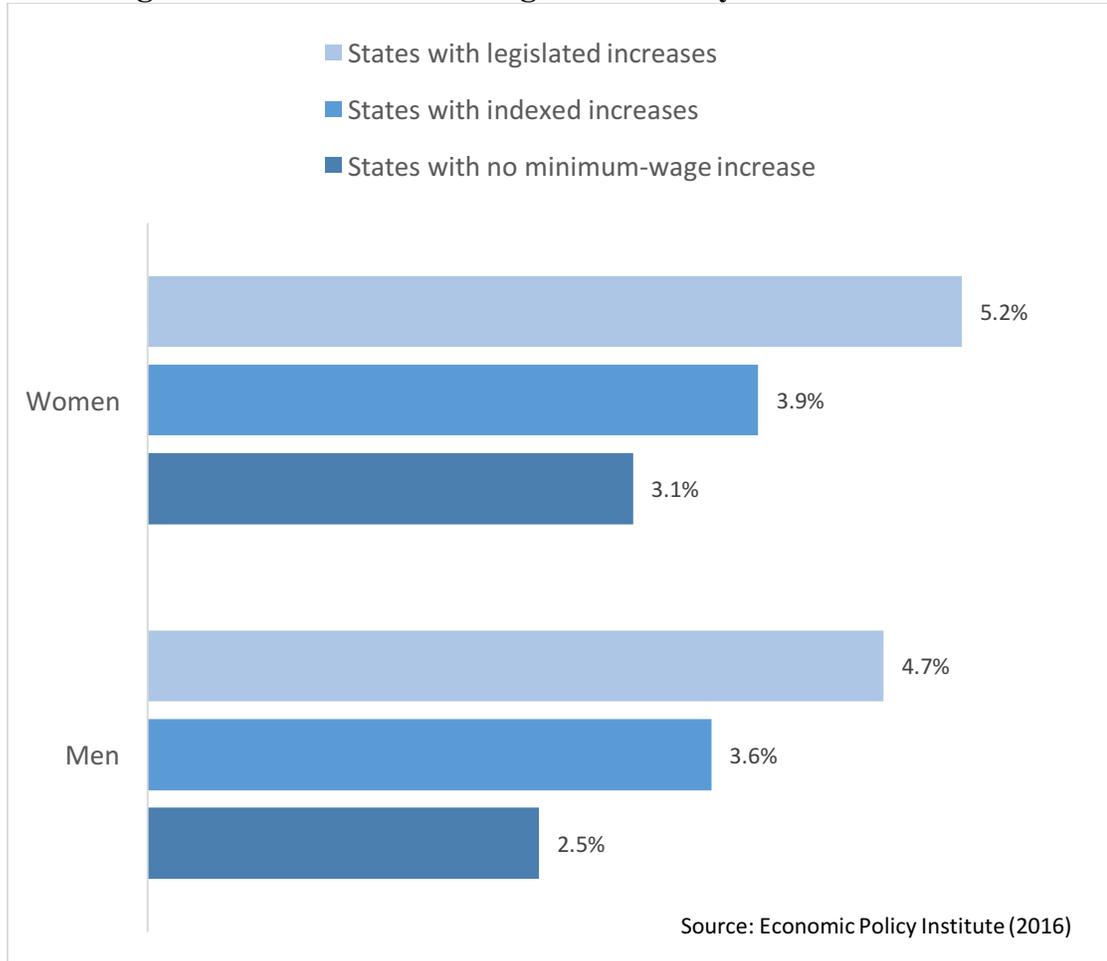
The authors emphasize that although incarceration has a negative impact on neighborhood outcomes for whites, their findings do not suggest incarceration is more harmful to them overall. The authors emphasize the importance of effective post-incarceration reintegration policies.

The report *How does incarceration affect where people live after prison, and does it vary by race?* is available at: <http://bit.ly/1puId5m>

A more detailed research paper, *Racial Variation in the Effect of Incarceration on Neighborhood Attainment*, upon which the shorter report is based, is available at: <http://1.usa.gov/1R6oSOI>

Fact of the Week

2015 Wage Growth for Lowest Wage Workers by Gender and State Minimum Wage Increase



Note: “Lowest Wage Workers” are those at the 10th percentile.

Source: Gould, E. (2016). *Wage Inequality Continued Its 35-year Rise in 2015*. Washington, D.C.: Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/1QGvVKZ>.

From the Field

Utah Advocates Defend Protections against Source of Income Discrimination, Achieve other Victories

When the 2016 General Session of the Utah State Legislature concluded on March 10, housing advocates were elated to have successfully blocked legislation that sought to overturn housing discrimination protections based on source of income. Other key legislative victories included a commitment of new state funds to fight homelessness, the passage of a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) measure, and changes to Medicaid that will benefit both chronically homeless persons and recently released prisoners. A robust coalition of community organizations that included the Utah Housing Coalition (UHC), an NLIHC State Coalition Partner, won these victories with strong data, effective messaging, and active organizing.

Senator Margaret Dayton (R) introduced Senate Bill 175 (S.B. 175) that would have modified the Utah Fair Housing Act to provide that a landlord’s refusal to participate in federal voucher programs will not constitute

wrongful discrimination. The legislation specified that rental payments from a local Public Housing Agency (PHA) through the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) program would no longer be considered as income, thereby allowing landlords to adopt “no Section 8” policies for their buildings. Ms. Dayton formulated her proposal with the assistance of the Utah Apartment Association, which insisted that the passage of the bill would leave more than ample housing supply for the state’s approximately 11,000 voucher holders. During the legislative hearing on S.B. 175, supporters argued that very few landlords would actually cease to accept vouchers, and the bill was primarily about choice. Landlords expressed concerns about PHAs being difficult to work with on matters such as inspections and repairs and expressed concerns about cumbersome paperwork requirements for federal programs.

Advocates worked to defeat S.B. 175 before the legislative session began, producing a sign-on letter with more than 40 organizations expressing strong opposition. The letter represented a broad coalition, including the Crossroads Urban Center, the Coalition of Religious Communities, the Anti-Hunger Action Committee, and the Utah Chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO). Prominent mayors indicated that they would lobby Governor Gary Hebert (R) to veto the legislation if it passed. Opponents organized a press conference on March 6, at which representatives from the Housing Authority of Salt Lake used data to refute many of the assertions made by the Utah Apartment Association. Advocates rebutted the argument that source of income protection was unnecessary by sharing data with the media on the negative impacts of Section 8 discrimination in states where no protections exist. Shortly after advocates launched their data-driven media campaign, the State Senate indicated it would not move forward with consideration of S.B. 175.

In other progress, the passage of House Bill 436 establishes the “Homeless to Housing Reform Restricted Account” with \$7 million in state funds, \$4.5 million of which is to be an ongoing source of revenue. Funds in the account will be used for grants to house or shelter Utah’s homeless population in accordance with priorities established by the state’s Homeless Coordinating Committee.

House Bill 431 requires all Utah public transit districts to develop policies to incorporate housing affordable to households with incomes at 60% of area median income. Transit districts can choose to develop policies with even deeper income targeting than the state-mandated 60% threshold.

Low income adults in Utah will also see additional healthcare benefits due to Medicaid expansions through the Affordable Care Act. The legislature passed House Bill 437, which contains numerous provisions to broaden Medicaid services, including new systems to ensure coverage for adults being released from prison.

Advocates look to build on this successful legislative session. Lieutenant Governor Spencer Cox (R) is convening an Affordable Housing Task Force to be comprised of government officials, community advocates, developers, and lenders. The Task Force is set to meet throughout 2016 to create a statewide plan to address affordable housing. UHC will be an active member of the Task Force.

“This legislative session has us feeling good about the direction of affordable housing policy in Utah,” said Tara Rollins, Executive Director at UHC. “I am grateful for the shared experience of similar coalitions in other states who were able to provide key data and suggestions to help us protect our ban on source of income discrimination.”

For more information about housing advocacy efforts in Utah, contact Tara Rollins at trollins@xmission.com.

Events

Webinar on Effective Responses to Homeless Encampments, March 30

The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP) will host a webinar on proven strategies to address homeless encampments. Attendees will learn how to comply with laws and policies that protect the rights of homeless people. Presenters will describe innovative local programs and policies that preserve the civil and human rights of homeless campers with effective, cost-saving solutions.

The free webinar will take place on Wednesday, March 30 at 2:00pm ET. Register at: <http://bit.ly/1Ub3a21>

Los Angeles NeighborWorks Training Institute, May 2-6

The next NeighborWorks Training Institute (NTI) takes place May 2-6 in Los Angeles, CA. The NTI will offer over 100 course offerings in affordable housing development and financing, housing asset management, community engagement, housing counseling, nonprofit management and leadership, and many other areas. The Wednesday symposium at the NTI is titled “Race, Culture and Opportunity” and will involve a day-long examination of how affordable housing and community development nonprofits can address racial, housing and economic disparities in their communities.

More information about the NTI and symposium are at: <http://bit.ly/1TdZMCQ>

Register for the NTI at: <https://trainingevents.nw.org/OnlineReg/Login/Login.aspx>

The Consortium for Housing and Asset Management Annual Conference, June 27-29

How to keep affordable housing sustainable is the challenge thought-leaders from across the affordable housing movement will be exploring at the Consortium for Housing and Asset Management (CHAM) annual conference in Columbus, Ohio, June 27-29. Presenters and participants will discuss emerging topics and trends within the asset management discipline, focusing on creative and effective strategies to “mind the gap” between income and expenses to ensure long-term sustainability of affordable housing. The keynote speaker will be David Smith, Chairman of Recap Advisors. The event is hosted by NeighborWorks America, Enterprise Community Partners, and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, and co-sponsored by Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing.

Information about how to register will be coming soon. If you have questions about the event, contact David A Fromm at: dfromm@nw.org.

Home Today, Home Tomorrow Design Challenge

AARP, AARP Foundation, Home Matters® and Wells Fargo Housing Foundation are accepting submissions for a new nationwide design challenge entitled “Re-defining Home: Home Today, Home Tomorrow.” The competition seeks replicable housing designs to meet the housing needs of Americans throughout the entirety of their lives.

The goal of the design challenge is to incorporate universal design elements to build an attractive, adaptable, and affordable home of the future that promotes aesthetically and functionally appealing designs for better living. New affordable standards in housing design are sought that serve residents well throughout their various life stages: from entering the workforce, getting married, having a family, and sending children to college to becoming a grandparent, pursuing new passions, careers and hobbies, and enjoying retirement.

Monetary awards will be made to three winning entries. The first-place winning design will be incorporated into an actual home and publically unveiled to provide an experiential learning opportunity for the general public.

To submit a proposal, a non-refundable registration fee in the amounts listed below must be paid for each submission before the deadline. The registration fee covers one submission. Multiple registrations are allowed.

Open Submission: \$150 on or before April 16, 2016; \$250 from April 17-April 29, 2016.

Student Submission: \$40 on or before April 16, 2016; \$50 from April 17-April 29, 2016.

Learn more about the design challenge at: <http://bit.ly/1jg5R1t>

NLIHC News

Farewell to Linda Couch

Long time NLIHC staff member Linda Couch has resigned to become the new Director of Housing Policy at Leading Age, the national association of homes and services for the elderly. Linda most recently served as Senior Vice President for Policy for NLIHC. Except for three years in the early 2000s when she previously worked at Leading Age, Linda has been with NLIHC since 1995. She is well known to NLIHC members and Capitol Hill staffers for her expertise on the federal budget and HUD programs that serve the lowest income people. NLIHC board and staff are grateful for her service and wish her well in her new endeavors.

NLIHC Still Accepting Applications for Research and Policy Summer Internships

NLIHC is accepting resumes for summer 2016 internship positions. NLIHC interns are highly valued and fully integrated into our staff work. We seek students passionate about social justice issues, with excellent writing and interpersonal skills.

The available positions are:

Policy Intern. Tracks new legislation, attends and summarizes Congressional hearings for the *Memo to Members* newsletter, participates in visits to Congressional offices, develops materials for use in lobbying the House and Senate to achieve NLIHC's policy agenda, and updates the NLIHC Congressional database.

Research Intern. Assists in ongoing quantitative and qualitative research projects, writes weekly articles on current research for *Memo to Members*, attends briefings, and responds to research inquiries.

The positions begin in June and run until August and are at least 20-30 hours a week. Two semester placements are possible. NLIHC provides modest stipends.

A cover letter, resume, and writing sample are required for consideration. In your cover letter, please specify that you are interested in the research summer 2016 internship position.

Interested students should send their materials to: Paul Kealey, Chief Operating Officer, National Low Income Housing Coalition, 1000 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005 via email to pkealey@nlihc.org.

NLIHC STAFF

Malik Siraj Akbar, Communications Specialist, x239
Andrew Aurand, Vice President for Research, x245
Michael Chapman, Policy Intern, x249
Josephine Clarke, Executive Assistant, x226
Sheila Crowley, President and CEO, x226
Dan Emmanuel, Research Analyst, x316
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