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Our Homes, Our Voices Week of Action

National Events Include Rally, Twitter Storm, Call-in Day, and Voter Registration Drive

The “*Our Homes, Our Voices*” National Housing Week of Action announces a series of national events for the week of July 22-29. They include:

Wednesday, July 26: Rally at US Capitol

Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA), NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel, National Alliance to End Homelessness President and CEO Nan Roman, and other affordable housing advocates will gather at the U.S. Capitol on the morning of July 26 for a rally and press event in support of affordable housing. For more information, email Sarah Jemison at: sjemison@nlihc.org

Wednesday, July 26, 2 pm ET: National Twitterstorm

Join us on July 26 at 2 pm ET for a national Twitterstorm. Use #OurHomesOurVoices to link your tweets to our national call for increased investments in affordable homes. By engaging on Twitter at the same time, we will draw the attention of members of Congress to the affordable housing crisis and the *Our Homes, Our Voices* campaign.

For sample tweets and images, see the campaign [resources page](#), or visit [this link](#) to easily tweet to your members of Congress.

Thursday, July 27: National Call-In Day

On July 27, advocates around the country will call their members of Congress to voice their support for programs that make homes affordable for those in need and strengthen communities. Use the script available on our [resources page](#) or visit [this link](#) for talking points to for your calls. (Please note that this event has been changed from its original date on July 25)

Friday, July 28: Launch of “Our Homes, Our Votes” Voter Registration Effort

We will finish the National Housing Week of Action with voter registration efforts in communities throughout the country. Public housing agencies and representatives at other subsidized housing properties will be providing voter registration forms and information in community rooms and offices. Get more information about the July 28 voter registration drive and access new resources: [here](#).

Nearly 40 Local #OurHomesOurVoices Events Planned Throughout the Country

The number of local events throughout the country continues to grow. To-date, local housing advocates have planned 39 events in communities nationwide. Events include rallies, storytelling activities, letter-writing campaigns, bus tours, and more—all urging members of Congress to fully fund investments in affordable housing and community development.

Elected officials including Mayor Marty Walsh of Boston, Governor Dan Malloy of Connecticut, and Mayor Helene Schneider of Santa Barbara plan to join local *Our Homes, Our Voices* events in their communities. Interested in inviting elected officials to your event? Visit the *Our Homes, Our Voices* [resources page](#) for an invitation template!

[Visit the Week of Action events page](#) to view the complete list of local events. If you’re interested in planning an event in your community, there’s still time! Please reach out to ourhomes@nlihc.org today!

New Resources for Your Event

In addition to a new suite of [voter registration and voter engagement materials](#), we have also added additional graphics, factsheets, and letter templates to our site. You can find them on the [resources page](#).

Take Action

Deadline Today: Respond to Senate Committee Call for Tax Reform Proposals

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) issued a request for ideas and feedback-due today, July 17- on how to improve the American tax system. NLIHC plans to submit the United for Homes (UFH) proposal calling for modest reforms to the mortgage interest deduction (MID) to better serve low and moderate income homeowners and to reinvest the significant savings into affordable rental homes for people with the greatest needs.

It is critical that members of the Finance Committee understand how Congress can use tax reform to help end homelessness and housing poverty in America without increasing costs to the federal government by reprioritizing federal housing policy. The MID does not promote homeownership, increases income inequality, and fuels the racial wealth gap. By embracing the UFH proposal, Congress can provide 25 million low and moderate income homeowners a greater tax break and generate \$241 billion in savings over 10 years to be reinvested into rental housing investments for the lowest income households in America.

NLIHC encourages advocates to submit comments to the Senate Finance Committee in support of the UFH proposal by emailing taxreform2017@finance.senate.gov today.

For sample comment language, see: <http://bit.ly/2u12KVr>.

For more information about Senator Hatch's request, see: <http://bit.ly/2siq8f1>.

Learn more about the United for Homes proposal at: <http://www.unitedforhomes.org/>.

Urge Congress to Fully Fund Rural Housing Investments

NLIHC continues to urge advocates to [contact](#) their members of Congress about fully funding rural housing programs. President Donald Trump's proposed FY18 budget would require significant reductions to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) rural housing appropriations, including a \$60 million cut to Section 521 Rural Rental Assistance, the elimination of the Multifamily Preservation and Revitalization program, and the elimination of key homeownership programs, including Section 502 Direct Homeownership Loans and Section 523 Mutual Self-Help Housing. The full House Appropriations Committee voted to advance their FY18 USDA spending bill on July 12. While the bill rejects Mr. Trump's more drastic cuts and program eliminations, it would still significantly reduce funding for rural housing programs from FY17 spending levels. ([See related article in this issue of Memo](#))

NLIHC and nearly 600 organizations from across the country signed onto a letter circulated by the National Rural Housing Coalition (NRHC) opposing Mr. Trump's proposed cuts and supporting federal rural housing investments.

NLIHC encourages advocates to call their members of Congress to urge them to fully fund rural housing programs.

Contact your Congressional delegation directly at: <http://bit.ly/2rr1AkV>.

Read NRHC's press release about rural advocates' letter to Congress at: <http://prn.to/2tmTGWB>.

Review NLIHC's analysis of the Trump administration's proposed budget, including funding for USDA Rural Housing programs, at: <http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/Trump-Budget.pdf>.

Read the draft FY18 USDA spending bill at: <http://bit.ly/2uSk2B2>.

Watch a recording of the House Appropriations Committee markup at: <http://bit.ly/2uRY9C0>.

Review NLIHC's budget chart at: <http://bit.ly/1SowzjU>.

Tell Congress to Protect and Expand the National Housing Trust Fund

There is still time to join the more than 1,000 national, state, and local organizations that have signed onto NLIHC's letter urging Congress to protect and expand the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF), which President Trump proposed to eliminate in his [FY18 budget](#). While a copy of the letter has been delivered to all members of Congress, there is still time for organizations concerned about homelessness and the lack of affordable homes [to sign onto the national HTF letter](#) before an updated version is sent to Capitol Hill later in the budget process.

The HTF is the first new housing resource in a generation exclusively targeted to help build and preserve housing affordable to people with the lowest incomes, including those who are homeless. Congress must protect the HTF from the administration's attack and instead significantly increase its funding to address the critical affordable housing needs of the lowest income renters in every community in the U.S.

Thanks to your advocacy and our champions in Congress, the draft spending bill in the House rejected the president's proposed elimination of the HTF and did not include any funding cuts to this important program. We will continue to track the bill's progress to ensure that no harmful amendments are offered. The Senate is expected to draft its spending bill later this month.

Sign the [letter](#) urging Congress to protect and expand the HTF and share it with your networks.

The letter with the current list of signatories is at: <http://bit.ly/2rSLcWF>.

Contact your Congressional delegation directly at: <http://bit.ly/2lBR7eM>.

United for Homes

UFH Webinar on Direct Action for Mortgage Interest Deduction Reform, July 18

United for Homes (UFH) endorsers are invited to join a webinar, "Direct Action and the United for Homes Campaign: Disruption and Agitation in the Effort for MID Reform," on Tuesday, July 18 at 2 pm ET. Presenters from NLIHC and a number of UFH endorsing organizations will discuss the importance of involving funding solutions like MID reform in local efforts that draw attention to the homelessness and affordable housing crisis in America.

Direct action has long played an important role in the movement for change to housing policy. Whether a moderate-scale action like a local sleep-out during Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week or a major event like the *Housing Now!* march on Washington in 1989, public acts of resistance and disruption can increase the profile of affordable housing in policy debates.

The webinar will feature Randy Shaw, editor of *Beyond Chron* and the director of San Francisco's Tenderloin Housing Clinic, a United for Homes endorser. Mr. Shaw is the author of four books on activism, including *The*

Activist's Handbook: Winning Social Change in the 21st Century and *The Tenderloin: Sex, Crime and Resistance in the Heart of San Francisco*. During the webinar, Mr. Shaw will discuss the importance of direct action throughout the history of housing policy change in America.

Michael Kane, executive director of the National Alliance of HUD Tenants will also present. Mr. Kane has been organizing residents of project-based rental assistance and other federally assisted properties for decades. He will speak to the power of involving low income renters and their perspectives in all protests, rallies, and other direct actions.

UFH webinars highlight best practices for advocacy and provide a broader understanding of how mortgage interest deduction reform is helpful to social movements focused on more than just housing. The most recent webinar in June, "Housing, Racial Equity, and United for Homes," provided campaign overviews and perspectives from endorsers who work on social justice for communities of color. Anj Chaudhry from the National Coalition for Asian and Pacific American Community Development, Lot Diaz from the National Council of La Raza, and Pinky Clifford from the Oglala Sioux Tribe Partnership for Housing shared information about how United for Homes would benefit the communities in their networks. Watch the June webinar at: <http://www.unitedforhomes.org/webinars/>.

Future webinars will feature guest experts, policymakers, advocates, and researchers on topical issues. All UFH webinars are available on the UFH website at: <http://www.unitedforhomes.org/webinars/>.

If you have not already registered for the monthly UFH endorser webinars, register for the July 18 event at: <http://bit.ly/2irHS2E>. Once you register, you will not need to register again for the monthly UFH endorser webinars.

If you are not already a UFH endorser, please join the campaign at: <http://www.unitedforhomes.org/join-the-movement/>.

If you are not sure if you are a UFH endorser, check the list of current endorsers at: <http://www.unitedforhomes.org/national-supporters/>.

Tax Reform Remains Priority for White House, Congress

Despite delays, White House officials hope to see tax reform legislation introduced and voted on in Congress after the August recess when Congressional members return to Washington. These officials say that tax reform remains a top priority for President Trump and the Republican-led Congress.

Many members of Congress have criticized this timetable as unrealistic, pointing to deep divisions among Republican law makers about the shape such reform should take. After months of negotiations, Republicans still disagree about whether to create a border adjustment tax and whether Congress should repeal the federal tax deduction for state and local taxes.

Meanwhile, Democratic leaders have expressed frustration about having been left out of tax reform deliberations, despite assurances by Senate Republican leaders that they would draft a bipartisan bill. Democrats have voiced concerns that Republicans will instead use a procedure known as budget reconciliation that would allow Congress to enact tax reform legislation with a simple majority of 51 votes in the Senate. Unlike most bills, legislation passed through a budget reconciliation is not subject to a filibuster, which requires 60 votes to overcome.

Urban Institute Hosts Discussion on Forecasts for the Rental Market Through 2030

The Urban Institute held a panel discussion, “Apartment Demand for the Next 15 Years: Can We Meet the Need?,” on July 13. The event included a discussion about the potential impacts of mortgage interest deduction (MID) reform.

Paige Mueller of Whitegate Real Estate Advisors predicted that the demand for rental housing will require the development of 4.6 million new multifamily units by 2030. Jamie Woodwell of the Mortgage Bankers Association explained the natural trends of the housing market from an economic perspective, emphasizing that the changes we see in housing costs are normal but require local and federal intervention. The cost to develop affordable housing is the same as market-rate housing, he said, and federal subsidies and other tools are necessary to incentivize affordable housing developments. Priya Jayachandran of Volunteers of America cited NLIHC’s *Out of Reach* report, which found that on average a minimum wage earner in America must work 117 hours per week to afford a two-bedroom rental home. She also noted the important role that local stakeholders, especially mission-based developers and owners, have in improving the availability of affordable housing.

When discussion opened to the audience, concerns were raised that reforming the MID may negatively influence homeownership rates. Laurie Goodman of the Urban Institute disputed this claim and argued that the MID does not have an impact on individuals’ decisions to purchase homes because it largely subsidizes the mortgages of the highest earners in the U.S.

Read more about the real burden of rent payments in the U.S. in NLIHC’s *Out of Reach* report [here](#).

Read more about the MID [here](#) and about the United for Homes campaign to make modest reforms to the MID to benefit lower income homeowners and to generate \$241 billion over ten years to invest in affordable housing solutions at: <http://www.unitedforhomes.org/>.

Administration

OMB Issues FY19 Budget Guidance

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a memorandum for all federal department heads, instructing them on how to prepare their departments’ FY19 budgets. Memorandum M-17-28 requires FY19 budgets to abide by the levels proposed in the administration’s FY18 budget request, which cut billions of dollars from non-defense discretionary programs, including affordable housing programs. OMB states that the FY19 budget will reflect the impact of reducing the federal civilian workforce and reforming the federal government as called for by Executive Order 13781, which requires OMB to devise a plan to eliminate unnecessary federal agencies, components of agencies, and agency programs, and to merge functions for greater efficiency (see *Memo*, [3/20](#)).

The FY19 budget is to build on the FY18 budget, which the Memorandum trumpets as one that “tackles society’s most pressing problems” by reprioritizing spending, “filling critical gaps in our warfighting readiness” and providing resources to enforce immigration laws.

M-17-28 emphasizes “fiscal restraint necessary to achieve 3% economic growth,” but also advises departments that they may identify additional investments in programs that support a department’s mission, as long as the department’s budget would not increase by more than 5%.

Along with their FY19 budgets, departments must also submit an Agency Reform Plan and a workforce plan, as directed by Memorandum M-17-22 (see *Memo*, [4/17](#)), which are to include proposals for eliminating activities, restructuring or merging activities, improving organizational efficiency and effectiveness, and maximizing

employee performance. Departments' FY19 budget requests must also include draft strategic plans covering fiscal years 2018 through 2022.

OMB Memorandum M-17-28 is at: <http://bit.ly/2u8Popc>.

Congress

Senate GOP Releases New ACA Repeal Bill

Senate Republicans released a new version of their legislation to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA) on July 13. The new bill, like previous versions, would cause millions of people to lose health insurance and slash Medicaid funding for supportive housing services that benefit people experiencing homelessness. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) will release its analysis of the updated bill early this week. An analysis done by the CBO estimated that an earlier version of the Senate bill would have resulted in 22 million more uninsured over ten years.

The revised bill seeks to unite Senate GOP support by providing additional funds states could use to reduce premiums and lower out-of-pocket costs. The bill would also allow insurers to offer health plans that do not comply with ACA standards. But the new bill does not depart from the basic structure of earlier versions, which roll back Medicaid expansion, dramatically cut its funding, and change the structure of the program by converting it into a block grant. The new bill also includes harmful provisions from past versions, allowing states to impose work requirements, higher premiums, and emergency room co-payments within Medicaid.

The bill continues to face considerable challenges in the Senate, with neither conservative nor more moderate Republican members satisfied. It is uncertain whether even a procedural motion to take up the bill this week will pass.

It is critical that housing advocates continue call their senators and tell them to oppose any healthcare bill that slashes Medicaid.

To contact your senators, call the congressional switchboard toll free at 202-224-3121.

Look up your federal elected officials on NLIHC's website at: <http://bit.ly/2s3UwGJ>

Senate Will Work through First Two Weeks of August Recess

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) announced that he will keep the Senate in session for the first two weeks of August. The announcement comes as Senate Republicans face a long legislative to-do list, including their effort to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. The extended session, however, gives advocates less time to meet with members of Congress in their districts during August recess.

In addition to addressing health care reform, the delayed recess gives Senators more legislative days to work on other issues, like tax reform, the debt ceiling, an FY18 budget resolution, and appropriations bills. Both the House and the Senate are significantly behind schedule in their budget and appropriations process this year, including passing appropriations bills that fund critical affordable housing and community development programs. Many lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have stated that a bipartisan budget deal is needed to lift the Budget Control Act spending caps that are setting FY18 allocation levels unworkably low for appropriations subcommittees.

Rep. Serrano Introduces Bill to Increase Public Housing Capital Fund, Improve Health Outcomes for Public Housing Residents

Representative Jose Serrano (D-NY) introduced H.R. 3215 on July 12 to increase funding for the Public Housing Capital Fund to \$5 billion annually, including \$600 million each year to reduce lead paint and other health hazards, through 2020. Congress has underfunded the repair and rehabilitation of public housing developments for decades. In FY17, the Public Housing Capital Fund received just \$1.9 billion.

“While there is more than \$26 billion in public housing capital needs, it is critical that we start prioritizing the health and well-being of our constituents,” Mr. Serrano stated. This investment in capital improvements is critical to protecting the health of public housing residents and extending the life of these community assets.

Seventeen representatives have cosponsored the bill to-date.

Read the bill here: <http://bit.ly/2vtCJKS>.

Budget and Appropriations

House Appropriations Subcommittee Votes on FY18 THUD Spending Bill

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, Urban Development and Related Agencies (THUD) voted on its FY18 spending bill on July 11. The bill next goes to the full House Appropriations Committee, which is scheduled to vote on the bill on July 17.

Constrained by the austere spending caps required by the Budget Control Act of 2011, the draft House bill provides at least \$1.5 billion less than what is needed to maintain program levels and cover inflationary costs to ensure that every household currently receiving housing assistance can remain in their homes. While the House bill does not propose funding cuts as deep as President Trump’s budget request, it would significantly reduce funding for critical affordable housing resources that provide lifelines for extremely low income seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, veterans, and other vulnerable populations.

During the hearing, Subcommittee Ranking Member David Price (D-NC) highlighted the allocation’s inadequacy, saying it was “unworkable.” The draft bill represents a \$1.1 billion reduction from FY17 levels. “As a result of that, we are not investing enough in our housing and transportation infrastructure to even maintain it, let alone expand it,” Mr. Price said. “We should be increasing our commitment to these housing and transportation programs, not making these cuts.” Mr. Price also stressed that while discretionary domestic spending is not the main driver of our nation’s deficit, time and again Congress has turned to this one area of spending to bear the whole brunt of deficit reduction.

In her opening statement, Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Nita Lowey (D-NY) stressed the importance of a bipartisan budget deal. “The primary obstacle is the majority’s failure to work with Democrats to develop topline numbers that make responsible appropriations bills possible. I do hope we start to work together,” she said.

The Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding (CHCDF), convened by NLIHC, has called on Congress to provide relief from these austere spending caps and to ensure affordable housing, community development, and transportation programs receive the highest allocation of discretionary funds possible. CHCDF also urges Congress to continue to treat defense and nondefense programs equally when providing budget relief.

Read the text of the proposed bill at: <http://bit.ly/2tfaCO9>.

Watch the archived webcast of the markup at: <http://bit.ly/2sKS7Wi>.

Read the NLIHC's analysis of the bill at: <http://bit.ly/2sLyR7j>.

Review NLIHC's budget chart at: <http://bit.ly/1SowzjU>.

Full House Appropriations Committee Votes on FY18 USDA Funding Bill

The full House Appropriations Committee voted on July 12 to report the FY18 U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) spending bill to the House. While the proposed bill rejects President Trump's more drastic proposals to eliminate or severely cut funding for rural housing and development programs, the bill would still significantly reduce funding for these programs from FY17 spending levels. Several members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture have previously stated that these programs warrant growth, not bare-minimum investments.

During her opening statement, Ranking Member Nita Lowey (D-NY) stressed the need to develop a bipartisan budget deal that lifts harmful spending caps. "Until a bipartisan process commences to raise caps on defense and non-defense spending, this is all for naught," she said. "Appropriations laws will not be enacted until we reach a common agreement on raising spending caps to more acceptable levels that enable us to adequately support our economy, protect the American people, and invest in a promising future for hardworking families."

The Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding (CHCDF), convened by NLIHC, has called on Congress to provide relief from these austere spending caps and to ensure affordable housing, community development, and transportation programs receive the highest allocation of discretionary funds possible. CHCDF also urges Congress to continue to treat defense and nondefense programs equally when providing budget relief.

During the hearing, Representative Dan Newhouse (R-WA) introduced an amendment to allow vacant or underutilized units supported by the Section 514 Farm Labor Housing Loan program to house legally admitted temporary workers, including H-2A workers. "H-2A employment has doubled over the past four years around the country," Mr. Newhouse stated. "Section 514 loans should reflect that reality and not exclude those workers from housing that is intended for farm laborers." Mr. Newhouse's amendment passed by a voice vote.

The bill will next go to the full House for a final vote, but it is unclear if and when it will be taken up on the floor of the House.

Read the draft FY18 USDA spending bill at: <http://bit.ly/2uSk2B2>.

Review NLIHC's budget chart at: <http://bit.ly/1SowzjU>.

Watch a recording of the vote at: <http://bit.ly/2uRY9C0>.

Learn more about federal budget and appropriations at: <http://nlihc.org/issues/budget>.

Trump Budget Includes Harmful Rent Increases for Millions of Low Income Families, Seniors, and People with Disabilities

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) estimates President Trump's budget proposal would allow HUD to increase rents for up to four million HUD-assisted low income families by an average of \$84 per month. The proposal could result in an average increase of 53% (\$101 per month) for HUD-assisted households with children, 28% (\$83 per month) for seniors, and 26% (\$72 per month) for households headed by a person with a disability. Working households could see an increase of 29% (\$111 per month). The increase could be

more than \$200 per month for 170,000 households. The report also provides the average change in rents for HUD-assisted households in each state and Congressional District.

The proposed budget includes multiple rent-related changes to HUD's subsidized housing programs. The proposed budget:

- Authorizes HUD to increase the tenant's contribution toward rent from 30% of adjusted income to 35% of gross income, eliminating the deductions that HUD-assisted households can currently use to reduce the income on which their rent contribution is based. HUD-assisted households are currently allowed to deduct from their income unreimbursed child-care, medical, and disability-related expenses. The elimination of these deductions will harm families with children, seniors, and people with disabilities;
- Eliminates utility reimbursements to the lowest income renters who pay at least some of their own utilities;
- Requires minimum rents of \$50 per month, regardless of the household's income;
- Authorizes HUD to modify voucher rules which could increase rents, including lower payment standards, higher minimum rents, or greater tenant contributions above 35% of income; and
- Prohibits enhanced vouchers issued to households living in subsidized properties that are converting to the private-market from covering rents higher than the regular payment standards, putting more households at risk of displacement.

The hardships imposed by these rent increases will disproportionately impact families with young children, the elderly, and the lowest income households. The elimination of income deductions would impact 3.7 million HUD-assisted households. Elimination of utility reimbursements would eliminate assistance of \$77 per month, on average, for 460,000 families, nearly all of whom live in deep poverty. This elimination could push housing expenses to more than 60% of a household's income, increasing the risk that these financially vulnerable households will have to make difficult trade-offs between paying for adequate food and other necessities or paying the rent. A minimum rent of \$50 disproportionately impacts the elderly and people with disabilities, because the two programs that target them (Section 202 and Section 811) currently do not have minimum rents.

CBPP's *Trump Budget's Housing Proposals Would Raise Rents on Struggling Families, Seniors, and People with Disabilities* is available at: <http://bit.ly/2tTKCda>.

The impacts of some of these changes by state and Congressional district are available in Table 2 of the report's appendix at: <http://bit.ly/2umBW1e>.

HUD

Senate Banking to Consider Three HUD Nominations

The Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs will meet in open session on July 18 to consider three nominations to key positions at HUD:

- Paul Compton, Jr., to general counsel;
- Anna Farias, to assistant secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity; and
- Neal Rackleff, to assistant secretary for Community Planning and Development.

Mr. Compton is a partner in the Birmingham, Alabama law firm Bradley Arant Boult Cummings, LLP. According to the White House website, Mr. Compton has advised banks and other financial institutions about investing in affordable housing and community development projects. He is outside general counsel to the Alabama Affordable Housing Association and a member of the American Bar Association Forum on Affordable

Housing and Community Development. A media release from the law firm adds that Mr. Compton has broad experience with federal and state Low Income Housing Tax Credit programs. According to HUD's website, the Office of General Counsel (OGC) attorneys provide legal opinions, advice, and services regarding all HUD programs and activities. The OGC includes the Fair Housing Compliance Division and the Fair Housing Enforcement Division.

Ms. Farias is the chair of the Board of Regents at Texas Woman's University. She held several roles at HUD between 2001 and 2008, including senior counsel to former HUD Secretary Mel Martinez, deputy assistant secretary for special initiatives, deputy assistant secretary for grant programs overseeing the Community Development Block Grant program, and director for the Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. Ms. Farias grew up in public housing in Crystal City, Texas, and later returned to be the executive director of the public housing agency there from 1993 to 2000.

Mr. Rackleff has served as the director of Houston's Housing and Community Development Department. According to a White House announcement, during his tenure Houston became the first major city to effectively end veteran homelessness while chronic homelessness declined more than 70%. Mr. Rackleff is a partner at the Locke Lord law firm, where he focuses on community and economic development, affordable housing, and inner-city revitalization.

The hearing is scheduled for 10:00 am ET in the Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 538.

Find details about the hearing at: <http://bit.ly/2uNUmWp>.

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HUD Publishes Revised Section 8 Renewal Policy Guide

HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing Programs published an updated version of the *Section 8 Renewal Policy Guide* (*Guide*), the book that provides guidance on renewing long-term, project-based Section 8 housing assistance payment (HAP) contracts. The transmittal memorandum provides a brief description of 27 changes and links to the relevant sections of the *Guide* where changes are presented in italics. In addition, Chapter 9, pertaining to rent comparability studies, is completely reorganized and updated.

The revised *Guide* was published on June 30 and will apply to renewals and rent amendment packages received or postmarked on or after July 28. The last major revision was published on August 3, 2015 (see *Memo*, [8/17/15](http://bit.ly/2tqnmmS)).

Section 8 Renewal Policy Guide is at: <http://bit.ly/2tqnmmS>.

Research

Spring *Shelterforce* Examines the Concept of Housing Affordability

The spring 2017 issue of *Shelterforce* features a series of articles that examine the standard measure of housing affordability that a household should spend no more than 30% of its income on housing costs. Several articles in the publication explore the 30% standard's strength and weaknesses, and illustrate the use of an alternative, residual income approach to measuring affordability. In this approach, what a household can afford to pay for housing is whatever is left over after paying for basic non-housing necessities, like food, health care and transportation. Because housing is often the first expense paid by struggling households, a household is considered to be "shelter poor" if it cannot afford other basic necessities after paying for housing.

Daniel K. Hertz summarizes the limitations of the 30% standard, which does not account for the fact that households without children or with higher incomes may be able to spend more than 30% of their income on housing and still have sufficient resources for other needs, that cheaper housing may be in locations with higher transportation expenses not considered housing costs, and that cheaper housing may be of low physical quality. Hertz advocates for the adoption of the residual income approach to address the first two problems.

Christopher Herbert, Alexander Hermann, and Daniel McCue of Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies compare the 30% standard and residual income approach across three metropolitan areas: Los Angeles (high cost), Phoenix (moderate cost), and Cleveland (low cost). They base the cost of non-housing necessities on budget data from the Center for Women's Welfare Self-Sufficiency Standard. They find that the 30% standard and the residual income approach produce similar overall estimates of households suffering from unaffordable rents. Their analysis reveals, however, that the 30% standard somewhat underestimates affordability problems of the lowest income households, and in high-cost metro areas it overstates the affordability problems faced by moderate income households. They conclude that the 30% measure of affordability will remain the standard because of its simplicity, availability over time and across most geographic areas, and accuracy.

Richard Heitler of the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board in New York City compares the 30% standard to a residential income approach in New York City. He bases the cost of non-housing necessities on the Economic Policy Institute's (EPI) Family Budget Calculator. Mr. Heitler concludes that the 30% standard underestimates affordability challenges for moderate income households (except for single-person households) in the high-cost market of New York City. Heitler points out that requiring families with housing assistance to contribute 30% of their income towards housing does not leave enough income for other necessities.

Andrew Aurand, NLIHC's vice president for research, compares the 30% standard with a somewhat different residential income approach. Using national data, he determined that households who do not have enough income to cover two-thirds of the poverty threshold are living in "housing poverty." The poverty threshold is the most conservative cost estimate of non-housing necessities among the articles. Dr. Aurand's analysis shows that the 30% standard underestimates housing affordability problems for the lowest income renters and overstates affordability problems for moderate income renters. The primary difference among the three residual income approaches is what constitutes basic non-housing necessities. A more generous definition will show more households higher up the income ladder experiencing a housing affordability problem.

The spring 2017 issue of *Shelterforce* is available at: <http://bit.ly/2uj0B6K>.

Renters Who Move Pay Higher Rents

A report from Zillow, *How to Save on Rent: Don't Move*, finds that renters who renew their lease typically pay less rent than those who move. In 2015, renters who moved in the past year paid 47% more in rent than those who had stayed in their current apartment for at least five years. The difference amounts to annual average savings of \$3,946 for these long-term renters.

The author suggests that landlords typically raise rents at a slower rate for renewing tenants. The greatest savings for renewing renters are in some of the hottest markets where market prices are rising the fastest. In San Jose, CA, renters who remained in the same apartment for at least five years paid \$9,266 less per year on average than renters who moved in the past year. The savings were almost as high in San Francisco and Boston.

Renters' savings increased with the length of their stay. In Boston, renters who had been in their apartment for two years paid \$943 per year less on average than recent movers, and renters who had been in their apartment for at least five years paid an average of \$8,979 less. Boston's hot housing market means that staying in the same unit, even for shorter periods, saves money for renters. Stays of two years or less, however, do not save money for renters in every market. In Las Vegas, renewal rents rose faster than new lease rents in 2015, making moves more cost-effective in the short term, not accounting for moving costs. But renters who had remained in

the same rental unit for at least five years still had average annual savings of \$842 compared to those who had moved within the past year.

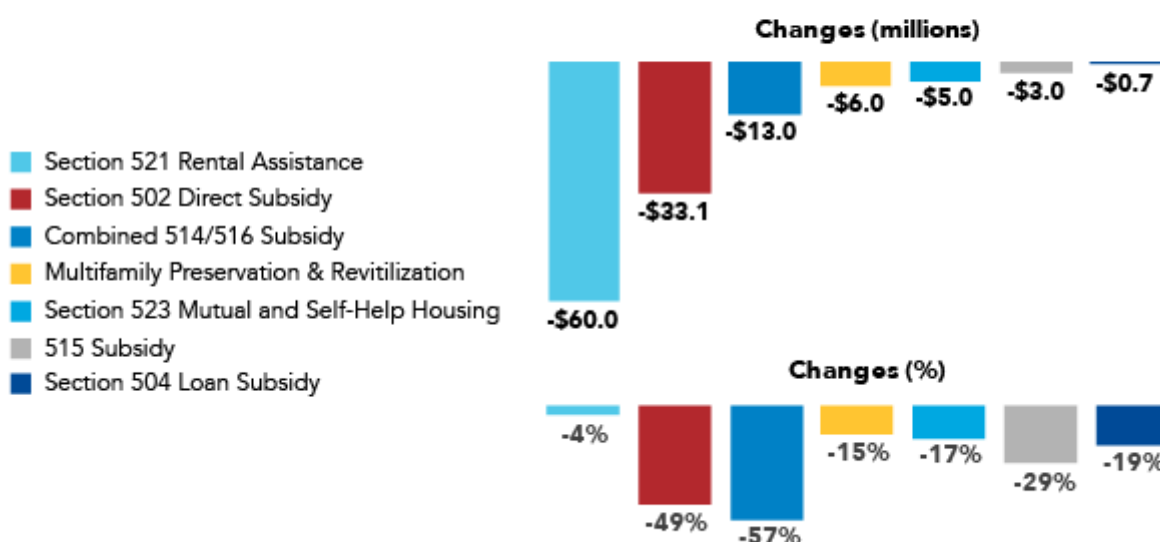
The report's findings are time-specific, meaning savings may not continue for those who remain in their current rental unit if the difference between renewal rents and new lease rents decline.

How to Save on Rent: Don't Move is available at: <http://bit.ly/2stVrAW>.

Fact of The Week

House Appropriations Committee Proposes Significant USDA Rural Housing Budget Cuts for FY18

Changes in Funding Levels for USDA Housing Programs: FY17 Budget to FY18 House Draft Budget



From the Field

Vermont Legislature Passes \$35 Million Housing Bond

The Vermont state legislature wrapped up its business for the year on June 21, having resolved an impasse with Governor Phil Scott (R) over teachers' health care benefits that resulted in a budget veto and the convening a special veto session. The resolution of the impasse led to final passage of an FY18 state budget, which Governor Scott signed on June 27. The budget includes a \$35 million bond for the production and rehabilitation of permanently affordable housing, both rental and homeownership. Mr. Scott first proposed the bond in his January state budget address, and the proposal quickly gained support in the state legislature. Passage of the bond represents Vermont's largest allocation of funding for state housing programs in ten years.

The Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) will issue the bond, which is expected to leverage between \$70 million and \$100 million in state, federal, and private capital beyond the value of the bond itself. Revenue generated by the bond will be administered and awarded by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB).

VHCB Executive Director Gus Seelig expects 100 units to be under construction in Brattleboro by the end of 2017 with revenue from the bond. These units will house 200 to 250 Vermont residents. He anticipates a development deal in Burlington for use of bond funds by winter. Middlebury is expected to construct workforce housing, while White River Junction will develop micro-apartments and other alternatives for people experiencing homelessness. The bond revenue will double Vermont's housing production and redevelopment activities in the coming years. It will aid in developing and rehabilitating up to 650 homes across the state. Projects will receive funds based on community needs, applications received, and the availability of resources for leverage.

Vermont's housing resources for FY18 remain unclear, though, given the precarious state of the federal appropriations process and proposed cuts to HUD, USDA, and essential HHS safety-net programs that would have catastrophic impacts on the lowest income Vermonters. "Even a small change could have a drastic effect (on the state)," Mr. Scott said. However, both he and Mr. Seelig hailed the housing bond as an economic stimulus for Vermont. Without safe, decent, and affordable housing for all the state's residents, economic growth will stall. Housing construction creates jobs, spurs economic activity, and generates state and local revenue.

The bond will be paid for via \$2.5 million in annual revenue from a property transfer tax over 20 years, through 2039. One and a half million dollars of that will come from VHCB's annual base appropriation. The other \$1 million will come from an increase in the transfer tax, thereby reducing the impact on VHCB's base annual appropriation. At least a quarter of the homes created will go to households earning under 50% of area median income (AMI). Another quarter will go to more moderate income households earning between 80% and 120% of AMI. According to VHCB, these two groups "most lack housing options" in the state. The remaining half of bond funds can support housing for people earning less than 120% of AMI but will more likely go to lower income Vermonters below 80% and 100% of AMI, subject to the decisions of VHCB's board. VHCB is already holding meetings across the state to identify the highest priority communities and potential projects.

The timing for the passage of the bond is critical, as homelessness and housing shortages are widespread across Vermont. According to NLIHC's 2017 *Housing Gap* report, there is a shortage of 10,866 rental homes affordable and available to the state's 18,138 extremely low income (ELI) renter households, defined at those with incomes at or below the poverty line or 30% of their area median income (AMI). There are only 40 rental homes affordable and available for each 100 of the state's ELI renter households. Vermont's 2017 Housing Wage is \$21.90 an hour. It has the 5th largest affordability gap for renters of any state in the nation and is the seventh most expensive state for rural (non-metro) areas.

Senate President Pro Tempore Tim Ashe (D/P) and Senators Kevin Mullin (R), Michael Sirotkin (D), Jane Kitchel (D), Ann Cummings (D), Becca Balint (D), Philip Baruth (D/P) and Alison Clarkson (D) played key roles in getting the new funds included in the state budget and raising the necessary new revenues, as did House Speaker Mitzi Johnson (D) and Representatives Helen Head (D), Janet Ancel (D), Kitty Toll (D), Fred Baser (R), and Sam Young (D).

"We are incredibly excited that the housing bond made it across the finish line this year," said Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition Coordinator Erhard Mahnke. "This was a huge team effort from so many people - from the governor and his team to key legislative leaders, mayors, VHCB's dedicated staff, and all our community housing partners and homeless service providers. It will have a tremendous impact on Vermont's long standing affordable housing needs, providing safe, stable homes for low and moderate income working Vermonters, people with special needs and those without homes."

For more information, contact Erhard Mahnke at erhardm@vtaffordablehousing.org.

Events

CBPP Holds Webinar on How Trump Budget Could Raise Rents for Millions, July 19

A [new analysis](#) by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) shows that President Trump's proposed FY18 budget could raise rents on up to four million low-income households that get federal rental assistance, with some of the largest increases falling on families and individuals that struggle the most to afford housing.

On Wednesday, July 19 from 2–3 pm ET, CBPP staff will discuss the proposed policy changes and the impact findings from their analysis, with opportunity for questions. To register for the free webinar, click [here](#).

Pre-Event Registration for August 14-18 NTI in Philadelphia is July 24

The next NeighborWorks Training Institute (NTI) will take place in Philadelphia the week of August 14-18. Pre-event registration is July 24. The NTI offers more than 100 course offerings in affordable housing development and financing; housing asset management; community engagement; community revitalization; community economic development; housing construction and rehabilitation; financial capability and homeownership education, coaching, and counseling; nonprofit management and leadership; and single-family and small business lending. In addition to taking training courses throughout the week, participants can attend a mid-week symposium, “[Creating Opportunities for Financial Inclusion and Economic Empowerment](#)” on August 16.

More information about the NTI is at: <http://bit.ly/2rgCylb>.

Register for the NTI at: <http://bit.ly/1ATs8Ia>.

Other NLIHC News

Keep Shopping . . . and Supporting NLIHC on Amazon Smile!

Please remember that you can support NLIHC while shopping online on [Amazon Smile](#). Amazon Smile is a simple and automatic way for you to support NLIHC and our mission to ensure that the lowest income households in America have access to affordable and decent homes. With every Amazon Smile purchase, Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to NLIHC at no additional cost to you!

Click here to start supporting NLIHC's work while shopping: <http://amzn.to/2ew9GOn>

Thank you for your support!

NLIHC Seeks Interns for Fall Semester

NLIHC is still accepting applications for internship positions for the fall 2017 semester. 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:

- **Field Intern.** Assists the NLIHC Field team in creating email campaigns focused on important federal policies, writing blogs, managing our database of membership records, mobilizing the field for the legislative efforts, and reaching out to new and existing members.

- **Communications/Media/Graphic Design Intern.** Prepares and distributes press materials, assists with media research and outreach for publication releases, works on social media projects, maintains a media database, and tracks press hits. Also assists with sending out e-communications; designing collateral print material such as brochures, flyers, and factsheets; and updating content on the NLIHC website. Graphic design and Adobe Creative Cloud (Illustrator, InDesign, and/or Photoshop) experience needed. Please provide 3 design samples and/or link to online portfolio in addition to a writing sample.

Fall interns are expected to work 25 hours a week beginning in August or September and finishing up in December. A modest stipend is provided. A cover letter, resume, and writing sample are required for consideration. In your cover letter, please specify the position(s) for which you are applying and that you are interested in the fall 2017 internship.

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.

Where to Find Us – July 17

NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel and other NLIHC staff will be speaking at the following events in the coming months:

- National Alliance to End Homelessness [conference](#) in Washington, DC, July 18-19
- A Home for Everyone's "[Making Housing a Priority](#)" Conference in La Crosse, WI, July 19-20
- "*Our Homes, Our Voices*" Week of Action rallies with Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA) and with the Monarch Housing and New Jersey Housing and Community Development Network [2017 New Jersey Congressional Reception](#) in Washington, DC on July 26
- [NeighborWorks Training Institute](#) in Philadelphia, PA, August 14-16
- The United Native American Housing Association [Summer Meeting](#) in Polson, MT on August 21
- [Kansas Housing Conference](#) in Wichita, KS on August 23
- The [Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress Event](#) in Newburgh, NY on September 14
- [New York Association on Independent Living](#) statewide conference, Troy, NY, September 18-19
- [Tennessee Housing Development Agency Conference](#) in Nashville, TN on September 21
- The Housing Washington 2017 "[24th Annual Affordable Housing Conference](#)" in Spokane, WA, October 2-4
- [Empower Missouri](#) annual conference in St. Louis, MO, October 5-6
- [Grounded Solutions Intersections 2017](#) in Oakland, CA, October 9-12
- [NALCAB's 2017 National Conference](#) in Ft. Lauderdale, FL on October 11
- [Ohio Housing Conference](#) in Columbus, OH on November 7

- [ReFrame Association Conference: Home, Health, and Hope](#) in Kingsport, TN on November 9
- Yale University event in New Haven, CT on November 28

NLIHC in the News

NLIHC in the News for the Week of July 9

The following are some of the news stories that NLIHC contributed to during the week of July 9:

- “How being homeless didn't change this Los Angeles cook's dream,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 14 at: <http://lat.ms/2tUpXpd>
- “Report: Only .1 percent of US minimum-wage workers live in a 1-bedroom they can afford,” *CNBC*, July 14 at: <http://cnb.cx/2sZdsaR>
- “America's public housing crisis may worsen with Trump budget,” *Chron.com*, July 12 at: <http://bit.ly/2tbCUxU>
- “Only 12 U.S. Counties Have Affordable Housing For Low-Wage Workers,” *Refinery29*, July 12 at: <http://r29.co/2ugYm4s>

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