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## Point of View

### The Post-Election Road Ahead for Affordable Housing

*By Diane Yentel, NLIHC President and CEO*

The stunning election results are still sinking in, and there remain more questions than answers to what it all means. In all the uncertainty, this much is clear: Donald Trump is our next president, he'll be working with a Republican-led Senate and House of Representatives, and they will advance policy and spending proposals that will have major impacts on affordable housing programs, the millions of low income people who depend on them, and the millions more who are in need.

President-elect Trump said little about housing or affordable housing on the campaign trail. But some of what he did comment on give us important insights into how his administration may impact affordable housing. He has committed to increase defense spending at the expense of non-defense spending, which could mean billions of dollars in cuts to housing and other anti-poverty programs. In addition, Mr. Trump has said he wants to cut non-defense spending by 1% every year, which would be devastating to affordable housing programs including Section 8 vouchers, public housing, and project-based rental assistance. Earlier in his professional career Mr. Trump was accused of violations of the Fair Housing Act, and as a candidate for president he committed to rolling back fair housing rules and requirements.

Much of what is next for how a Trump administration approaches affordable housing depends on who is appointed to lead the Department of Housing and Urban Development. There are a few former HUD alumni from the Bush administrations working on the transition team, and several names have moved to the top of the short list for HUD secretary. Among them are Pam Patenaude, president of the Terwilliger Foundation for Housing America's Families, and former Senator Scott Brown, who also serves on the Terwilliger Center's executive committee. Both Ms. Patenaude and Senator Brown have deep knowledge of, experience with, and proven commitments to affordable housing. Both would be excellent choices.

Also on the shortlist for HUD secretary, however, are Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino, who has spent over a decade fighting his obligations under the Fair Housing Act, and Ken Blackwell, a senior fellow at the Family Research Council. Who President-elect Trump decides to nominate will give us important insights into his priorities for housing programs.

In Congress, House Speaker Ryan (R-WI) and Senate Majority Leader McConnell (R-KY) will have full reign to advance the Republican policy and spending agenda. They will use the parliamentary procedure of "budget reconciliation" to advance much of it, freeing themselves from any threats of filibusters and needing only a simple majority to enact legislation.

So, what's in store for housing policy in the next Congress? We will see efforts to lower domestic non-defense spending and to implement much of Speaker Ryan's anti-poverty agenda, which could include welfare reform-type changes such as work requirements and time limits to all anti-poverty programs. Congress will move quickly to enact comprehensive tax reform – legislative drafts are already being written - that dramatically lowers corporate and individual tax rates by reducing or eliminating tax expenditures and credits, possibly including the Low Income Housing Tax Credit. Reform of the mortgage interest deduction (MID) is on the table as another "pay-for" to lower tax rates. We'll need to pull out all the stops to ensure that savings from MID reform are reinvested into affordable rental housing programs. The Republican Congress may also work towards dismantling Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

That brings us to the national Housing Trust Fund, which may be threatened from multiple angles. I expect efforts by House Republicans to eliminate the HTF to resurface quickly, and we could again see appropriators attempt to fill HUD budget holes with HTF dollars. FHFA Director Mel Watt could be replaced by someone

who shares former FHFA Director DeMarco's view that contributions to the HTF should be suspended while Fannie and Freddie remain in receivership.

Here's the bottom line: We have our work cut out for us in the coming years. The threats to critical affordable housing programs that serve the poorest households are real and significant. With the housing crisis having reached new heights and with the lowest income families being hit hardest and suffering the most, we have to redouble our efforts - not only to protect, preserve and defend critical housing programs, but to expand them.

This work has never been easy – increasing resources for the poorest seniors, families, kids, people with disabilities, and veterans has always required a long and determined struggle. Did the work just get harder? Yes. But our commitment to ending homelessness and housing poverty is unwavering. And knowing that there are hundreds of thousands of us uniting behind this cause makes me confident we will prevail in the end.

You can read much more about the election's impact on affordable housing issues in the lame duck and next Congress at: <http://bit.ly/2g3chEt>

Also, and please join us for a special webinar on The Changing Post-Election Landscape for Affordable Housing on Friday, December 2, 2016 at 1:00 PM. Register at: <http://bit.ly/2ePX0VF>

And if you're not yet a member of NLIHC, there's no better time to join. Our members are our strength!

## **NLIHC News**

### **NLIHC 2017 Housing Policy Forum: Advancing Solutions in a Changing Landscape, April 2-4**

NLIHC's 2017 Housing Policy Forum in Washington, DC, April 2-4, will convene thought-leaders, policy experts, researchers, affordable housing practitioners, low income residents, and leaders from Capitol Hill and the new Administration to explore advancing solutions for affordable housing in America in the changing post-election landscape. The Forum will explore emerging challenges and opportunities given the political leadership changes in Washington, DC and the best strategies for achieving positive affordable housing policy solutions.

NLIHC will invite the new HUD secretary to share his or her vision and priorities and to engage with participants about their concerns, aspirations, and recommendations. A panel of Capitol Hill insiders will share their perspectives on what lies ahead for affordable housing in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress. The Forum will also explore the lessons learned from the first year of implementation of the national Housing Trust Fund; the intersections between housing and health, education, criminal justice reform, and other areas; ideas for addressing the needs in public housing; the latest research on vouchers and homeless assistance programs; and ways to rebalance U.S. federal housing investments to end homelessness and housing poverty, among many other topics. The third day of the Forum will provide an opportunity for participants to visit their congressional delegations on Capitol Hill.

The 2017 Housing Leadership Award recipients will be honored on the evening of April 4. J. Ronald Terwilliger, chairman emeritus and former CEO of the Trammel Crow Residential Company, will receive the 2017 Edward W. Brooke Housing Leadership Award for his outstanding contributions to the cause of rebalancing federal affordable housing policy. The Brooke Award is named for the late Senator Edward W. Brooke (R-MA), who championed low income and fair housing while in Congress and later served as the chair of NLIHC's Board of Directors. The award is presented to individuals who advocate for affordable housing on the national level. Retired Preservation of Affordable Housing President and Founder Amy Anthony will be the recipient of the 2017 Cushing N. Dolbeare Lifetime Service Award. The Dolbeare Award is named after NLIHC's founder, considered the godmother of the affordable housing movement. NLIHC presents the Dolbeare Award to individuals for their lifetime of service to affordable housing.

The NLIHC 2017 Housing Policy Forum and Leadership Reception will take place at the Washington Court Hotel in Washington, DC. Up to three individuals from the same NLIHC member organization may attend the Forum. Register at: <http://bit.ly/2dnJpnS>

A limited number of shared-lodging hotel scholarships will be awarded on a first-come-first-served basis to low income residents who are current NLIHC members and who pay their own Forum registration fee (“self-pay participants”). To ensure a broad geographic distribution, no more than two scholarships will be awarded to participants from any one state (with the exception of New York, where a donor has provided funding for six). The scholarships provide residents attending the Forum up to three nights of shared hotel lodging on April 1, 2, and 3. Scholarship recipients must commit to attending all Forum sessions, including a special resident session on Sunday, April 2 and Lobby Day on Tuesday, April 4. To apply for a scholarship, contact James Saucedo at [jsaucedo@nlihc.org](mailto:jsaucedo@nlihc.org). Questions? Call 202-662-1530 or email [jsaucedo@nlihc.org](mailto:jsaucedo@nlihc.org).

### **Submit Nominations for 2017 NLIHC Organizing Award**

NLIHC is accepting nominations for the 2017 Annual Organizing Award. The Organizing Award recognizes outstanding achievement during 2016 in state, local and/or resident organizing activity that furthers NLIHC’s mission of achieving socially just public policy to ensure people with the lowest incomes in the U.S. have affordable and decent homes. Special consideration will be given to nominations that incorporate tenant- or resident-centered organizing. The award will be presented at the NLIHC 2017 Housing Policy Forum, held April 2-4, 2017 at the Washington Court Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Nominations for the award are due by 5:00 pm E.T. on Wednesday, February 1, 2017.

An Organizing Award Committee composed of NLIHC board members and previous award winners will determine this year’s honoree. Two representatives of the honored organization will receive complimentary Forum registrations, hotel accommodations, and transportation to Washington, D.C. to accept the award.

To be eligible, nominated organizations must be current NLIHC members. Organizations may self-nominate. NLIHC board members and Award Committee members may not nominate an organization with which they are employed or affiliated.

Nominations should contain the following information:

- Name and contact information of the organization being nominated;
- Name and contact information of the individual or organization submitting the nomination (if different from above);
- Description of the organization’s achievement in the area of state, local and/or resident organizing in 2016, and how that achievement has contributed to furthering NLIHC’s mission (800-word maximum); and
- Supporting materials that describe the activity or impact, such as press clips or campaign materials (optional).

Please submit your nomination online using the form at <http://www.nlihcforum.org/awards> or send your nomination by email to [jsaucedo@nlihc.org](mailto:jsaucedo@nlihc.org).

Contact James Saucedo at [jsaucedo@nlihc.org](mailto:jsaucedo@nlihc.org) with questions.

## Budget

### Join Twitter Storm Urging Congress to Pass FY17 Spending Bills without Harmful Policy Riders

Join NLIHC and the Clean Budget Coalition for a Twitter storm on November 17 at 2:00 pm ET to tell Congress to pass clean FY17 spending bills and to reject harmful policy riders that threaten to derail a final bill and put vital investments in affordable housing at risk.

If Congress does not approve full-year FY17 spending bills for the Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Agriculture (USDA) and instead passes a long-term stopgap spending measure known as a Continuing Resolution (CR), these agencies will see a steep shortfall in funding. A long-term CR would result in deep cuts to critical housing programs that could cause thousands of families and children to lose access to stable housing, putting them at increased risk of homelessness.

For more information on how long-term CR will negatively impact affordable housing programs, go to: <http://bit.ly/2aK61e1>

Hashtags for the Twitter storm can include #noriders #cleanbudget #doyourjob #getitdone #finishthebudget, #omnibus, and #thankful. You can also use the following sample tweets:

- 1000s of low income families may lose access to #affordablehousing unless #Congress passes a #cleanbudget ASAP.
- Without a #cleanbudget, Congress would put vital investments in #affordablehousing at risk.
- The #affordablehousing crisis is reaching new heights. This is not the time to put vital investments at risk. Pass a #cleanbudget.
- America is stronger when families have #affordablehousing. Tell Congress to pass a #cleanbudget ASAP to protect vital investments.

## Housing Policy

### Why President-Elect Trump Should Invest in Affordable Housing Infrastructure

As a candidate, President-elect Trump stated that a large-scale investment in infrastructure would be a top priority for his incoming administration. To maximize this investment's impact on long-term economic growth, NLIHC strongly urges that any infrastructure package include resources to increase the supply of affordable housing for families with the lowest incomes. This includes an expansion of the national Housing Trust Fund, increased funding to rehabilitate and repair public housing, and additional Housing Choice Vouchers, among others.

Investing in affordable housing infrastructure—through new construction and preservation—will bolster productivity and economic growth, provide long-term assets that connect low-income families to communities of opportunity and economic mobility, and support local job creation and increased incomes.

The connection between affordable housing and infrastructure is clear: like roads and bridges, affordable housing is a long-term asset that helps communities and families thrive. Increasing the supply of affordable housing—especially in areas connected to good schools, well-paying jobs, healthcare, and transportation—helps families climb the economic ladder and leads to greater community development.

Research shows that the shortage of affordable housing costs the American economy about \$2 trillion a year in lower wages and productivity. High housing costs constrain opportunities for families to increase earnings and slows GDP growth. And each dollar invested in affordable housing infrastructure boosts local economies by leveraging public and private resources to generate income and local tax revenues while creating jobs.

See NLIHC's factsheet on housing and infrastructure at: <http://bit.ly/2fDBAIX>

## HUD

### Small Area FMR Final Rule Cleared by OMB

The final rule that would implement small area Fair Market Rents (Small Area FMRs or SAFMRs) on a limited scale cleared the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on November 4. The final rule is now at HUD. HUD announced its intention to amend Fair Market Rent (FMR) regulations for the Housing Choice Voucher program in a *Federal Register* notice on June 2 (see *Memo*, [6/8](#)) and sought public comments. The intent was to deconcentrate the use of Housing Choice Vouchers in select metropolitan areas. A proposed rule published in the *Federal Register* on June 16 (see *Memo*, [6/20](#)) would apply to tenant-based vouchers and to project-based vouchers approved after the effective date of Small Area FMR designations in select areas.

SAFMRs reflect rent standards in U.S. Postal Service ZIP code areas while traditional FMRs reflect a single rent standard for an entire metropolitan region. The goal of using SAFMRs is to provide voucher payment standards that are more aligned with neighborhood-scale rental markets, resulting in relatively higher subsidies in neighborhoods with higher rents and greater opportunities, and lower subsidies in neighborhoods with lower rents and concentrations of voucher holders.

NLIHC submitted comments both to HUD's initial request for input and to the proposed rule. NLIHC supported Small Area FMRs, but only if the final rule has provisions holding existing voucher households harmless and only if public housing agencies (PHAs) in metropolitan areas with vacancy rates less than 5% have the option not to use SAFMRs. NLIHC wrote that many voucher households may choose to stay in their current homes and neighborhoods because of important familial, social, cultural, and other ties to those neighborhoods. In addition, households with children may not want to switch schools or lose affordable, convenient child care, while elderly or disabled households may wish to live close to doctors and essential service providers (see *Memo*, [7/6](#) and [8/22](#)).

The OMB notice is at: <http://bit.ly/2eLmbsv>

### HUD Announces Homeless Preference Management Fees

HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing Programs issued a memorandum on October 26 to promote the use of homeless preferences at HUD-assisted multifamily properties. Multifamily Regional Centers or Satellite Offices may now approve both a special and an add-on management fee to cover eligible staff time expenses incurred by owners when establishing and managing a homeless preference.

A special management fee will be permitted during a nine-month start-up period to enable owners and management agents to create and implement the homeless preference process. The special fee amount is \$2.50 per unit per month (PUPM), not to exceed \$4,500 per property annually. Activities eligible for the special management fee include formalizing agreements and establishing a referral process with the local Continuum of Care (CoC) and homeless service providers, amending the *Tenant Selection Plan*, receiving applicant referrals from the CoC, and screening applicants to ensure they meet the property's eligibility criteria.

Once the homeless preference is in place, management agents may collect a monthly add-on fee as long as at least one previously homeless individual or household is admitted to a particular property during a one-year

period. The add-on fee is \$2.00 PUPM, not to exceed \$3,600 per property annually. Activities eligible for the add-on fee include facilitating a household's move-in and access to necessary household items, as well as providing support, education, and tools to property management staff when coordinating services and resources during lease up and the duration of tenancy.

The memorandum is at: <http://bit.ly/2fyBhQP>

### **Moving to Work Research Advisory Committee Call, December 13**

The Moving to Work (MTW) Research Advisory Committee will meet via conference call on Tuesday, December 13 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm ET. The public is invited to listen in. The goal of the meeting is to continue discussions and make recommendations about whether to study mobility and/or place-based models through a cohort of the 100-agency MTW expansion. Specifically, the committee will discuss the policy framework and research methodology related to increasing housing choice, including strategies to encourage participant mobility and place-based based strategies as a platform for health and educational outcomes.

The public may listen in by calling 800-230-1074. Persons with hearing impairments may follow the discussion by first calling the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 800-877-8339 and providing the FRS operator with the conference call number, 800-230-1074. Members of the public will have a limited opportunity to provide feedback during the call but must pre-register by going to the MTW Expansion page at: <http://bit.ly/1WfCQn2>

The full agenda for the meeting is in a *Federal Register* notice at: <http://bit.ly/2eLslsE>

The Committee was established on May 2, 2016 to advise HUD on specific policy proposals and methods of research and evaluation related to the expansion of the MTW demonstration to an additional 100 high-performing public housing agencies. On July 26 and 28, HUD convened two conference call meetings of the Committee, followed by a two-day in-person meeting on September 1 and 2 (see *Memo*, [5/9](#), [6/27](#), [7/18](#), and [8/22](#)). The minutes of these meetings are available on the MTW Expansion website at: <http://bit.ly/1WfCQn2>

### **RAD Notice Provides Fair Housing and Relocation Guidance**

HUD issued Notice H 2016-17/PIH 2016-17 providing guidance regarding fair housing and civil rights as well as resident relocation statutory and regulatory requirements when public housing agencies (PHAs) convert public housing to project-based rental assistance under the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD). The Notice, which applies only to First Component conversions, became effective on November 10.

RAD is intended to preserve and improve low income housing by enabling PHAs to leverage Section 8 rental assistance contracts to raise private debt and equity for capital improvements. RAD has two components. First Component RAD allows up to 185,000 public housing units to be converted from their existing public housing assistance to project-based Housing Choice Vouchers (PBVs) or to Section 8 project-based rental assistance (PBRA) by September 30, 2018. Second Component RAD allows private properties assisted through the Rent Supplement (Rent Supp), Rental Assistance Program (RAP), and Moderate Rehabilitation programs to convert an unlimited number of Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPVs) to PBRA or PBVs.

The "RAD Notice," PIH 2012-32 REV-2, issued on June 15, 2015 (see *Memo*, [6/22/15](#)), updated an earlier RAD Notice. The 2015 Notice established the requirement that specific PHA decisions and activities planned for a First Component RAD conversion be reviewed by HUD prior to implementation – a "front-end" fair housing and civil rights review. The purpose of the front-end review is to help PHAs and project owners meet their fair housing, other civil rights, and relocation obligations by explaining the situations that call for a front-end review, the details of HUD's review procedures, the type of information that must be submitted, and the timeframes for these reviews.

If a RAD conversion of public housing will require residents to move temporarily or permanently, certain statutory and regulatory resident relocation assistance requirements must be followed. The new Notice reiterates previous requirements and adds new relocation requirements. Notice H 2016-17/PIH 2016-17 replaces and supersedes Notice H 2014-09/PIH 2014-17 (see *Memo*, [7/18/14](#)).

The new Notice applies to all projects that have applied for RAD First Component conversion that have not yet converted; it does not affect any front-end civil rights approvals provided by HUD prior to November 10. However, with respect to relocation activities, if a PHA has already submitted a Financing Plan that has been accepted for full review after initial screening for completeness, the PHA may request to be governed by the previous Notice H 2014-09/PIH 2014-17.

HUD shared with NLIHC that the fair housing and civil rights provisions of the Notice do not represent significant changes, but are primarily a reminder of pre-existing requirements with an effort to provide greater clarity and transparency.

Some of the key provisions pertaining to fair housing and civil rights listed in the introduction of the Notice include:

- An outline of conditions under which HUD will conduct a front-end review to determine whether the site is in an area of minority concentration relative to the site's housing market area;
- Guidance on the concepts of "area of minority concentration" and "housing market area" that are reviewed when determining whether a site is in an area of minority concentration;
- Information about what HUD will consider and what PHAs should provide evidence of in order for a proposed site to meet exceptions that permit new construction in an area of minority concentration. This includes:
  - An explanation of the presumptions necessary for meeting the sufficient comparable opportunities exception and
  - A description of the factors that HUD may consider in evaluating the overriding housing needs exception; and
- An articulation of the issues that HUD will consider in completing the front-end civil rights review for transfers of assistance, including, for example, accessibility and minority concentration.

Regarding relocation provisions, there are a number of new features, several of which are in response to advocates. The Notice requires:

- PHAs or project owners to prepare a written relocation plan for all transactions that involve permanent relocation or temporary relocation anticipated to exceed 12 months;
- PHAs to provide residents with a RAD Information Notice (RIN) before a RAD application is submitted in order to ensure that residents are informed of potential project plans and of their rights in connection with RAD;
- Project owners to provide a notification of Return to the Covered Project, (residents have a right to return to the converted property);
- PHAs to maintain detailed data regarding each household that will be relocated, with key dates of notices and moves.

In addition, the relocation section of the Notice:

- Provides enhanced guidance on the right to return requirements, any offers of alternative housing options, and the documentation that must be retained when tenants choose an alternative housing option and decline their right to return; and



- Describes how HUD has administratively implemented the Uniform Relocation Act (URA) requirements and the URA relocation assistance and payments for displaced residents who decline the right to return and instead choose voluntary permanent relocation.

There are many more relocation provisions in the Notice. NLIHC will share further analysis in a future *Memo to Members*.

HUD seeks comments from the public regarding the clarity and organization of the Notice. Any comments should be submitted to [RAD@hud.gov](mailto:RAD@hud.gov) within 30 days of the issuance of the Notice.

Notice H 2016-17/PIH 2016-17 is at: <http://bit.ly/2fEfXcB>

More information about RAD is on page 4-13 of NLIHC's *2016 Advocates' Guide* at: <http://bit.ly/22QZiEm>

## **Fair Housing**

### **HUD and DOJ Update Fair Housing Act Guidance about Land Use Laws**

HUD and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) released a Joint Statement updating guidance about how the federal Fair Housing Act applies to state and local land use and zoning laws. The guidance is designed to help state and local governments better understand how to comply with the Fair Housing Act, as well as to help the public understand their rights.

The Joint Statement updates and expands upon DOJ's and HUD's Joint Statement on Group Homes, Local Land Use, and the Fair Housing Act, issued on August 18, 1999. The Joint Statement is in the form of 27 questions with answers.

The Fair Housing Act prohibits a broad range of housing practices that discriminate against individuals on the basis of seven protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, sex, disability, family status (families with children), and religion. The Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution gives federal laws, such as the Fair Housing Act, precedence over conflicting state and local laws. Consequently, the Fair Housing Act prohibits state and local land use and zoning laws, policies, and practices that discriminate based on a characteristic protected under the Fair Housing Act. As defined in the Fair Housing Act, prohibited practices include making unavailable or denying housing (including vacant land that may be developed into residences) because of a protected characteristic.

The Joint Statement provides examples of state and local land use and zoning laws or practices that may violate the Fair Act, such as:

- Prohibiting or restricting the development of housing based on the belief that the residents have a particular protected characteristic, such as race, disability, or family status. An example of such a restriction is a moratorium on the development of multifamily housing because of concerns that residents will include those with a particular protected characteristic.
- Imposing restrictions on housing because of alleged public safety concerns based on stereotypes about the residents or anticipated residents who have protected characteristics. An example is requiring a proposed development to provide additional security measures based on a belief that persons with particular protected characteristics are more likely to engage in criminal activity.
- Refusing to provide reasonable accommodations to land use or zoning policies when such accommodations may be necessary to allow persons with disabilities to have an equal opportunity to use and enjoy the housing. An example is denying a request to modify a setback requirement so an accessible sidewalk or ramp can be provided for one or more persons with mobility disabilities.

A land use or zoning practice can result in an unjustified discriminatory effect if it caused or predictably will cause a disparate impact on a group of persons, or if it creates, increases, reinforces, or perpetuates segregated housing patterns because of a protected characteristic. Examples include minimum floor space or lot size requirements that do not have a legally sufficient justification and that increase the size and cost of housing, if such an increase has the effect of excluding persons from a locality or neighborhood because they have protected characteristics. Similarly, prohibiting low income or multifamily housing may have a discriminatory effect on persons because of their protected characteristics, and if so, would violate the Fair Housing Act, absent a legally sufficient justification.

When enacting or applying zoning or land use laws, state and local governments may not act because of the fears, prejudices, stereotypes, or unsubstantiated assumptions that community members may have about current or prospective residents because of the residents' protected characteristics. Doing so violates the Fair Housing Act even if the officials themselves do not personally share such biases. For example, a city may not deny zoning approval for a low income housing development because the development may house residents with a particular protected characteristic that the community fears will increase crime and lower property values. Similarly, a local government may not block a group home or deny a requested reasonable accommodation in response to neighbors' stereotyping fears or prejudices about persons with disabilities or a particular type of disability.

The Fair Housing Act does not protect an individual whose tenancy would be a direct threat to the health or safety of other individuals, or who might cause substantial physical damage to others' property, unless the threat or risk to property can be eliminated or significantly reduced by a reasonable accommodation. To determine whether someone poses a direct threat, there must be an individualized assessment based on reliable, objective evidence such as current conduct or a recent history of overt acts. The assessment must consider the nature, duration, and severity of the risk of injury; the probability that injury will actually occur; and whether there are any reasonable accommodations that will eliminate or significantly reduce the direct threat. A state or local government must take into account whether an individual has received intervening treatment or medication that has eliminated or significantly reduced the direct threat.

The Joint Statement is at: <http://bit.ly/2emU4kE>

## **Research**

### **Poverty Crosses Party Lines**

A report by Elizabeth Kneebone at the Brookings Institution examines poverty trends in Republican and Democratic congressional districts. The report, titled *Poverty Crosses Party Lines*, demonstrates the existence of poverty in every congressional district in the U.S., regardless of whether the district is represented by a Republican or Democrat. These findings underscore the bipartisan nature of poverty in the U.S. and the need for bi-partisan solutions.

Kneebone's analysis utilized Census data from 2000 and the 2010-2014 period. In the 2010-2014 period, districts currently represented by Democrats had a higher rate of poverty (17.1%) than those represented by Republicans (14.4%). However, more people lived in poverty (25.1 million) in Republican districts than in Democratic districts (22.7 million).

Between 2000 and 2014, 96% of congressional districts saw significant growth in the number of people living in poverty. The poverty rate grew in 96% of Republican districts and in 86% of Democratic districts. The population living in poverty grew by 49% and 33% in Republican districts and Democratic districts, respectively.

The population living in poverty has grown faster in suburban areas than in cities, small metro areas, or rural areas (see “Fact of the Week” in this *Memo to Members*). Between 2000 and 2014, the poor population in suburban areas climbed by 74.7% in Republican districts and by 50% in Democratic districts. This finding is consistent with other research from Brookings that shows a national trend of increasing suburban poverty.

The report also examined poverty at the neighborhood level. Nearly every congressional district contained a neighborhood where the poverty rate was 20% or more in the 2010-2014 period. Additionally, 213 Republican districts and 163 Democratic districts had at least one neighborhood where the poverty rate was at least 40%. In short, both individual poverty and deep neighborhood poverty exist across party lines in the U.S.

*Poverty Crosses Party Lines* is available at: <http://brook.gs/2fB1T3H>

## **Teenagers Benefit in Adulthood from Public Housing and Vouchers**

A new study by Fredrik Andersson, John Haltiwanger, Mark Kutzbach, Giordano E. Palloni, Henry Pollakowski, and Daniel Weinberg found that young adults who had lived in public or voucher-assisted housing as teenagers had higher earnings and lower rates of incarceration than young adults from unassisted low income households.

The study suggests that housing vouchers and public housing provide low income parents with greater financial resources to devote to their children’s development, which improves adult outcomes later in life. Vouchers may give recipients greater residential choices, as long as they can find housing in the private market. Public housing may give residents greater stability because they don’t have to search for a rental home in the private market.

Every additional year of living in voucher-assisted housing as a teenager was associated with an increase in earnings at the age of 26 for females and males by 4.7% and 2.6%, respectively. Non-Hispanic black females benefitted the most, with a 7.0% increase in young adult earnings for every year of voucher-assisted housing as a teenager. Hispanic females saw an increase in young adult earnings by 4.5% for every year of voucher assistance.

Every additional year in public housing as a teenager was associated with an increase in young adult earnings by 4.9% and 5.1% for females and males, respectively. Non-Hispanic black and Hispanic females saw a 5.5% and 7.1% increase in young adult earnings for every year in public housing.

Vouchers and public housing also reduced the likelihood of incarceration among young adults. Each additional year of living in voucher-assisted or public housing as a teenager between 1997 and 2005 reduced the likelihood of incarceration in 2010 by 0.4 and 0.1 percentage points for females and males, respectively. The authors found similar results for public housing, where an additional year of living in public housing was associated with a reduction in the likelihood of incarceration by 0.5 and 0.2 percentage points for females and males, respectively.

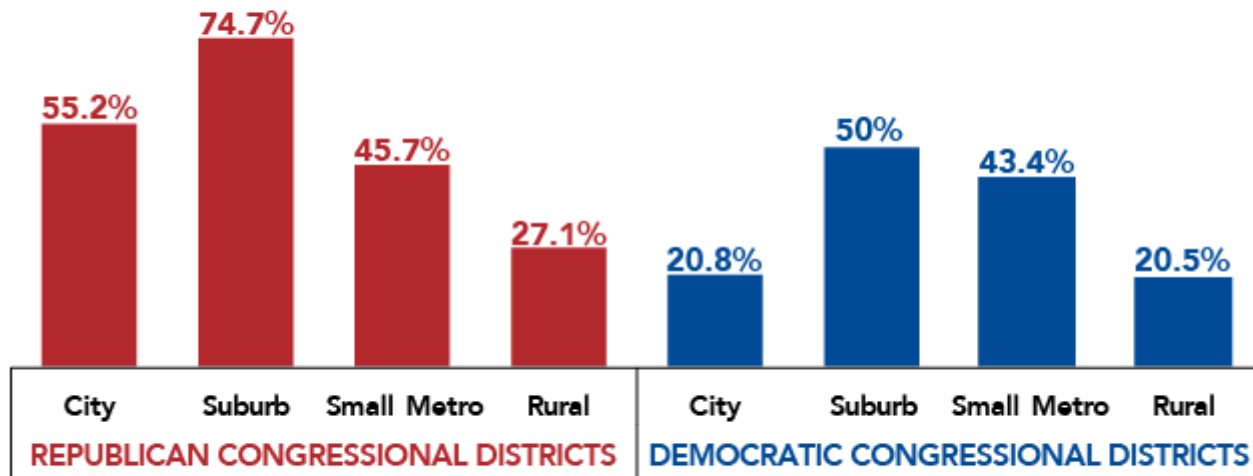
The authors used confidential data from the Census Bureau, HUD data on public and voucher-assisted housing residents, and public Census data to identify households with two or more teenagers who lived in public or voucher-assisted housing between 1997 and 2005, the teenagers’ earnings at the age of 26, and their rates of incarceration.

*Childhood Housing and Adult Earnings: A Between-Siblings Analysis of Housing Vouchers and Public Housing* is available at: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w22721>

## Fact of the Week

### Poverty Growth Higher in Republican vs. Democratic Congressional Districts

#### Percentage Change in the Poor Population by Geography Type, 2000 to 2010-2014



Source: Kneebone, E. (2016). Poverty Crosses Party Lines. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/research/poverty-crosses-party-lines/#AL>.

Source: Kneebone, E. (2016) Poverty Crosses Party Lines. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/research/poverty-crosses-party-lines/#AL>.

## Housing & the Election

### Voters Approve State and Local Affordable Housing and Minimum Wage Initiatives

Voters in states and jurisdictions across the country cast ballots on November 8 on a number of affordable housing initiatives aimed at combating the housing affordability crisis and alleviating poverty. A significant number of the initiatives passed.

Voters in Alameda County, Santa Clara County, and Los Angeles County, CA, and Portland, OR passed initiatives to raise property taxes modestly to generate revenues to finance affordable housing developments. Residents of Santa Monica, CA voted for a proposal to increase sales taxes by half a cent to raise revenue for affordable housing.

Propositions were approved in Berkeley and Los Angeles County, CA and Detroit, MI to increase taxes on multi-unit property owners and developers, the new revenue to be used for low-income housing.

Voters in Mountain View and Richmond, CA passed initiatives to expand rent controls, but similar propositions failed in Alameda County and Burlingame, CA. In Baltimore, MD residents passed a proposal to establish an affordable housing trust fund to alleviate housing cost burdens for very low-income families.

Voters in Asheville and Greensboro, NC passed initiatives to allocate significant percentages of their annual transportation budgets to expand the development of affordable housing. And voters in Rhode Island passed a \$50 million Housing Opportunity Bond initiative to establish statewide housing programs.

Maine, Arizona, Colorado, and Washington also passed laws to increase their state minimum wages. All four states will increase their minimum wages to at least \$12 an hour by 2020. Washington voted to raise its minimum wage to \$13.50 an hour, while Colorado pegged its minimum wage to the cost of living after reaching \$12 an hour in 2020.

Read more at: <http://bit.ly/2g1bmUK>

## **Events**

### **Pre-Event Registration for December NeighborWorks Training Institute in DC Closes November 21**

The pre-event registration for the NeighborWorks Training Institute (NTI) taking place December 12-16, 2016 in Washington, DC closes November 21. The NTI will offer more than 100 courses in affordable housing development and financing, housing asset management, community engagement, community revitalization, housing counseling, nonprofit management and leadership, and many other areas. The Wednesday symposium at the NTI is titled “Creating Economic Opportunities: Sharing Strategies” and will explore practical ways of addressing individual, geographic, and systemic drivers of economic disparities in communities across the country.

More information about the NTI and symposium are at: <http://bit.ly/2aVM07A>

## **More NLIHC News**

### **NLIHC Seeking Communications/Graphic Design Interns for Spring**

NLIHC is seeking applications for our spring communications/graphic design intern position. 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 communications/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. The intern also assists with sending out e-communications, updating content on the NLIHC website, and revising collateral print material such as brochures, flyers, and factsheets. Some graphic design experience is a plus.

Spring interns are expected to work 25 hours a week from mid-January to early May. NLIHC provides modest stipends.

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 a spring 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](mailto:pkealey@nlihc.org).

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