

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 30, 2025

Chairman Tim Scott
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban
Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Chairman French Hill
Committee on Financial Services
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Scott and Chairman Hill:

We write today to request that you hold hearings in the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking Housing and Urban Affairs and the U.S. House Committee on Financial Services regarding allegations from whistleblowers inside the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that HUD leadership is systemically failing to enforce fair housing and civil rights laws. Specifically, we urge you to call HUD Secretary Scott Turner up to testify before Congress and answer for the Department's alleged failure to follow the law.

HUD is responsible for implementing and enforcing the Fair Housing Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 109 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).¹ These laws offer critical protection to ensure that people across the country can access safe, affordable housing on fair and equal terms. HUD's Office of Fair Housing (OFH) within the Department's Office of General Counsel and its Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) play key roles in HUD's efforts to ensure compliance with its legal obligations.²

Yet, according to current and former employees within OFH and FHEO, HUD leadership is systemically undermining the Department's fair housing, civil rights, and VAWA implementation and enforcement efforts, putting the Department on "an unalterable course towards violating its statutory and regulatory obligations" to the American public.³ Specifically:

¹ HUD, "Report Housing Discrimination," <https://www.hud.gov/reporhousingdiscrimination>; HUD Exchange, Fair Housing and Civil Rights Laws, Guidance, and Tools, <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/fair-housing/laws-guidance-tools/#laws>.

² HUD, "About the Office of General Counsel- Fair Housing," <https://www.hud.gov/stat/ogc-about>.

³ Letter from Senator Warren to Acting Inspector General Brian D. Harrison, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Inspector General, September 22, 2025, <https://www.banking.senate.gov/newsroom/minority/breaking-new-hud-whistleblower-claims-expose-trump-administrations-targeted-attacks-on-civil-rights-warren-calls-for-independent-investigation>.

- HUD leadership told staff that fair housing work was “not a priority,” described a well-staffed OFH as an “optics problem,” and is reducing the size of the office by 70 percent. HUD leadership allegedly informed existing OFH staff that “fair housing was ‘not a priority’ of the administration, that less civil rights work would be performed under this administration, and that there was an ‘optics problem’ with [OFH] being as large as it was.”⁴ Despite warnings that pulling staff away from civil rights and fair housing efforts could hinder HUD’s ability to comply with its statutorily mandated functions, HUD leadership nevertheless reportedly took steps towards reducing the size of OFH by 70 percent. HUD officials allegedly informed “OFH attorneys...that they could go to almost any other office [within the agency]; they must simply abandon fair housing work.”⁵
- HUD may no longer have the capacity to enforce VAWA. Whistleblowers allege that HUD will no longer have the capacity to fulfill its VAWA obligations due to staffing cuts implemented by the Trump Administration. The Department is reportedly moving to reassign 75 percent of the VAWA team at OFH, including its supervisors—a move that, if it goes through, will leave the Department unable to support survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking.⁶
- HUD officials have implemented a “gag order” on attorneys and closed or halted over 100 housing discrimination cases. According to current and former HUD staff, HUD leadership has prevented OFH attorneys from communicating with external parties both within and outside of HUD “without express approval from political leadership,” inhibiting the agency’s ability to implement civil rights and fair housing laws. In addition, the agency has dropped “major investigations and cases concerning alleged housing discrimination and segregation, including some where the agency already found civil rights violations.”⁷

Furthermore, according to recent reporting, HUD leadership issued new internal guidance last week to further roll back the agency’s enforcement of the law. Specifically, the guidance stated that cases involving “tenuous theories of discrimination,” such as clearly discriminatory practices like appraisal bias and discriminatory zoning restrictions, would “no longer be prioritized.”⁸ HUD has also reportedly erroneously described previous federal efforts to prevent redlining—a discriminatory practice involving denying certain communities access to financial services, like mortgages—as “legally unsound.”⁹

The enforcement of fair housing and civil rights laws is not an “optics problem,” as administration officials have reportedly stated. Congress has directed HUD to prevent housing

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ New York Times, “Trump Appointees Roll Back Enforcement of Fair Housing Laws,” September 22, 2025, Debra Kamin, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/22/realestate/trump-fair-housing-laws.html>.

⁹ *Id.*

discrimination, regardless of which political party sits in the White House. The alleged efforts by HUD leadership to dismantle decades of progress are shameful, betray the American public, and represent a profound abuse of taxpayer dollars. Our respective Committees must take these allegations seriously and call on Secretary Turner to testify before Congress. Failure to act leaves millions of Americans at risk of rampant discrimination in housing and mortgage lending.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
Ranking Member
Committee on Banking,
Housing, and Urban Affairs



Maxine Waters
Ranking Member
Committee on Financial
Services