COMMITTEE ON HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT

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By Email

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
Senator
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
Senator
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Steve Womack
U.S. Congressman
2412 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development reductions in personnel and budget and potential freezes of federal funding

Dear Minority Leader Schumer, Senator Gillibrand, Senator Hyde-Smith, and Congressman Womack,

The Housing and Urban Development Committee of the New York City Bar Association ("the City Bar") along with the Legal Problems of the Aging Committee are deeply concerned by and oppose the anticipated personnel cuts to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD"). As the lead federal agency responsible for national policy and programs that foster inclusive communities through affordable housing initiatives, urban development, and homelessness prevention, the proposed reductions in staff threaten to undermine HUD's critical role in addressing the critical housing needs of millions of Americans.

HUD's mission is fundamental to the well-being of communities, particularly those that have been historically marginalized and underserved. A reduction in personnel at HUD and its

About the Association
The mission of the New York City Bar Association, which was founded in 1870 and has 23,000 members, is to equip and mobilize a diverse legal profession to practice with excellence, promote reform of the law, and uphold the rule of law and access to justice in support of a fair society and the public interest in our community, our nation, and throughout the world.

budget will undoubtedly result in diminished capacity to effectively administer vital programs and federal resources, such as those aimed at providing Section 8 rental assistance to individuals and projects, supporting fair housing practices, operating and maintaining public housing, addressing homelessness, and ensuring the ongoing creation and preservation of affordable housing for low-income households. Moreover, such cuts could exacerbate existing challenges in the areas of homelessness, housing discrimination, disaster relief and urban revitalization.

The City Bar is also troubled by the Administration's recent efforts to pause or freeze federal grants and funds previously approved, but not yet distributed, such as funding aimed at preventing homelessness, providing critical healthcare services and food to underserved communities. Such efforts are being rightfully litigated in the courts which are also resulting in delays for nonprofit providers to access federal funding for their program and staffing needs according to a recent memo by the National Council of Nonprofits.[1]

Whether a reduction in personnel or budget, or freezes of federal funding, such measures have created an atmosphere of uncertainty not just for tenants but for property owners who rely on HUD's rental assistance programs such as Section 8 to ensure rents are paid in their buildings and affordable housing developers and their commercial lenders who rely on the consistency of such rental assistance programs as much-needed new projects are being underwritten. State and local authorities also face the additional burdens of having to reevaluate their existing federal resources and consider gap-filling using state resources.

We believe that the sustained success of HUD's programs is essential to the economic and social fabric of our nation especially during this critical time where Americans face high levels of inflation, housing shortages and high rents, and recurring natural disasters. We urge you to stand firm against the proposed measures and continue to advocate against reductions to personnel and program funding at HUD so it remains equipped to serve the diverse and growing needs of American communities.

We stand ready to work collaboratively with you and other policymakers, advocates, and stakeholders to ensure that the critical work of HUD and non-profit service providers throughout the country continues without interruption, and that our nation's housing and urban development challenges are addressed with the urgency and attention they deserve.

Respectfully,

Farhana H. Choudhury and Julia A. Solo, Co-Chairs
Housing and Urban Development Committee

Legal Problems of the Aging Committee

[1] National Council of Nonprofits, *Why We Filed a Lawsuit Against the Administration* (Feb. 10, 2025), *available at* https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/articles/why-we-filed-lawsuit-against-administration (last accessed on April 11, 2025).