



July 8, 2019

Office of the General Counsel
Rules Docket Clerk
Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 Seventh Street SW, Room 10276
Washington, DC 20410-0001

RE: Docket No. FR-6124-P-01

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of Bend the Arc: Jewish Action, Bay Area, I am submitting the following response to the request for public comment regarding the Department of Housing and Urban Development's proposed rule issued in the May 10, 2019 Federal Register (Docket No. FR-6124-P-01). Bend the Arc strongly opposes HUD's proposed changes to the implementation of section 214 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1980.

Bend the Arc is dedicated to building a more just and equitable society for all people in the United States. Through organizing and advocacy, we seek not just to assuage the inequalities that affect our economy and politics, but to transform the core structures that produce these inequalities. HUD's proposed rule threatens to exacerbate existing inequalities facing immigrant families who rely on public and subsidized housing. The rule would be a profound policy failure resulting in the eviction of thousands of families, further deterioration of the homeless and housing crisis, and increased government expenditures. Should the proposed change proceed, HUD's actions would be in direct conflict with its responsibility to "enforce fair housing laws" and its "business of helping create a decent home and suitable living environment for all Americans."

The proposed rule is misleading, as Section 214 already prohibits the Secretary of HUD from making federal housing assistance available to undocumented immigrants. The rule illustrates that HUD is not dedicated to helping American citizens secure critical housing services, but rather establishes its commitment to fostering an atmosphere of uncertainty and fear among immigrant families, including those that are U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents. Under the proposed change, mixed-status families would have to separate in order to receive housing assistance or forgo assistance completely. Those whose programs would be terminated would potentially fall into homelessness, not only causing untold suffering and trauma, but significantly increasing the public costs associated with providing them with safe and stable housing. Those

who would suffer most include 55,000 children who are U.S. citizens or otherwise eligible for housing benefits. In the Bay Area, thousands of individuals - including Section 8 program recipients and public housing residents - would be impacted. With an already unprecedented number of homeless individuals struggling to access affordable housing, HUD is proposing to push thousands more to the brink of homelessness.

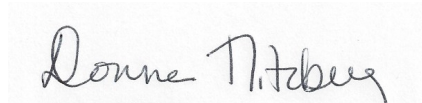
Furthermore, by rescinding mixed-status families' benefits, HUD will need to seek millions more from Congress in order to provide subsidies to the same number of households with eligible members. Should HUD transfer subsidies from mixed-status families to non-mixed families, costs would increase due to the removal of pro-rated subsidies that are paid to mixed-status families. In order to make up for the removal of pro-rated subsidies, HUD would need to reduce the number of households that receive assistance or seek additional funding from Congress to maintain subsidies to the same number of public housing units and voucher holders. Such a change is estimated to cost approximately \$193-\$227 million to serve the same number of households should prorated subsidies be rescinded.

We appreciate HUD's attempt to address the affordable housing crisis, but find its proposal discriminatory, cruel, and serving no legitimate policy purpose. HUD's proposed rule would force taxpayers to spend millions of dollars for the dubious purpose of harming immigrant families. HUD would do well to stop using undocumented immigrants and their families as scapegoats and instead call for new investments in public and subsidized housing resources to ensure that all Americans have access to a decent, safe place to live. We strongly urge you to reject the proposed rule.

Sincerely,



Igor Tregub
Legislative Liaison,
Bay Area Regional Council



Donna Nitzberg,
Bend the Arc Bay Area
Core Leader

Bend the Arc: Jewish Action, Bay Area