



National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials

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November 10, 2014

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Tim Johnson
Chair, Senate Banking Committee
United States Senate

The Honorable Mike Crapo
Ranking Member, Senate Banking Committee
United States Senate

Dear Sirs:

On behalf of the more than 20,000 members and affiliates of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO), and the more than 3,100 housing and redevelopment authorities nationwide who help more than two million families in need of safe and affordable housing in quality communities, I am writing to ask that the Senate act with all deliberate speed to confirm Lourdes Castro Ramirez, the Administration's nominee to become the next Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

We realize that other equally deserving individuals are also waiting for final action on their respective nominations, and that each of these individuals has an important role to play in the final two years of the current Administration. However, the Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing has a critically important role: he or she is the steward of an overwhelming share of HUD's funding, which is provided by American taxpayers to address the housing needs of the nation's most vulnerable families and individuals. Administration of the Public Housing and Section 8 programs, which together house more than 3 million families at a combined level of federal spending totaling over \$25 million dollars, is by itself a mammoth undertaking. However, the Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing also shoulders the massive responsibility of ensuring the physical viability of our nation's public housing inventory, which totals some 1.15 million units nationwide and which suffers under an estimated unfunded capital backlog of over \$30 billion. Given the scope and importance of these duties, there is simply too much at stake to delay the confirmation of the President's nominee.

We also believe that HUD needs a responsible and experienced person in this position who can guide decision-making responsibly with respect to long-overdue reform of regulations and procedures impacting the successful administration of both the Public Housing and Section 8 programs. Years of burdening both programs with requirements that are questionable at best and are at worst unfunded

Preston Prince, CME, President; **Stephen W. Merritt**, PHM, Senior Vice President; **Terry M. Feveryear**, PHM, Vice President-Housing; **Elizabeth S. Glenn**, Vice President-International Research and Global Exchange; **Diane Haislip**, SPHM, CMMO, CMVO, CMPO, Vice President-Member Services; **Harden A. Oldfield III**, CME; Vice President-Professional Development; **Dionne Roberts**, Vice President-Community Revitalization and Development; **Deanna Wagner**, NCC, Vice President-Commissioners; **Saul N. Ramirez, Jr.**, Chief Executive Officer

mandates has increased the cost to the federal government of running these essential programs. At the same time, over-regulation has actually in many cases diminished the ability of housing authorities to act in the best interests of those they serve. The continued absence of a confirmed Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing will seriously undermine the actions that HUD can take now to reduce burdens on housing authorities and the people they serve.

The President has nominated Lourdes Castro Ramirez, an eminently qualified individual who currently serves as the Executive Director of a nationally recognized housing authority in San Antonio (Tex.). She is an exceptional professional who can quickly fulfill the responsibilities of the position she has been nominated to assume. We heartily endorse Ms. Castro Ramirez to be the next Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing at HUD.

In conclusion, we urge the Senate to move on this nomination so that the hard work of sustaining the incredibly important programs that are under the jurisdiction of this Assistant Secretary can continue through the end of this Administration. Thank you for this opportunity to address you on this vitally important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Saul N. Ramirez, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'S'.

Saul N. Ramirez, Jr.