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1201 16th Street, NW | Washington, DC 20036 | Phone: (202) 833-4000

Lily Eskelsen García  
*President*

Rebecca S. Pringle  
*Vice President*

Princess R. Moss  
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Kim A. Anderson  
*Executive Director*

February 4, 2020

U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Oversight and Reform  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 3 million members of the National Education Association who teach and support students in schools and on college campuses in 14,000 communities, we applaud you for holding the upcoming hearing, “A Threat to America’s Children: The Trump Administration’s Proposal to Gut Fair Housing Accountability.” The hearing highlights the effects on children of the administration’s actions to weaken enforcement of the Fair Housing Act, and we appreciate the opportunity to submit these comments for the record.

The Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule (AFFH) sets out a framework for local governments, states, and public housing entities to take “meaningful actions to overcome historic patterns of segregation, promote fair housing choice, and foster inclusive communities that are free from discrimination.” However, the Trump administration has issued a proposed rule to revise the definition of the AFFH rule in ways that would weaken the Fair Housing Act and lessen accountability.

Numerous studies have concluded that:

- Public school funding is tied to property taxes, and school funding is related to property values within a residential area. Racially segregated schools in areas of poverty have fewer resources and higher teacher turnover and cannot provide their students with the wealth of opportunities that schools in higher-income areas can provide. ([Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, July 2018](#))
- Schools that the most disadvantaged black children attend are segregated because they are in segregated, high-poverty neighborhoods. This adds an additional barrier to academic achievement. ([Economic Policy Institute, November 2014](#))
- In such neighborhoods, there is less access to routine and preventive health care; this lack of access contributes to higher absenteeism from school. ([Georgetown University Health Policy Institute Center for Children and Families 2015](#))

All students, regardless of family income, deserve the opportunity for a good education. This is inextricably linked to their families’ opportunities to live in desegregated, affordable housing. NEA strongly opposes the Trump administration’s proposal to revise the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association