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National Low Income
Housing Coalition
662-1530

Dear Representative:

We the undersigned 60 national and local organizations strongly urge you to take quick and positive action on the Fish-Edwards Housing Amendments Act - HR 1158.

Passage of the bill this year is critical since fair housing legislation has not passed since the Civil Rights Act of 1968. The current law, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 makes discrimination illegal. However, the current law fails to provide adequate protection and enforcement procedures against housing discrimination. Past and present Secretaries of HUD and members of Congress from both parties, as well as former President Carter and President Reagan have called for stronger enforcement provisions for fair housing.

Housing discrimination based on race and national origin persists in our society as evidenced by HUD's estimates that at least two million incidents occur each year. Housing discrimination often leads to homelessness, especially among female headed households with children. The undersigned believe that all people should have the freedom to select the home and location of their choice.

The Fish-Edwards Housing Amendments Act - HR 1158 corrects Title VIII in the following areas. First, HR 1158 would establish a fair and expeditious method of redress by incorporating into the law an Administrative Law Judge hearing process. This hearing process is simpler than a court's, and assures that an investigation will occur and a final decision on the complaint will be made and enforced.

Second, HR 1158 extends protections to include disabled persons and their families with children. Disabled people, of whom there are approximately 36 million, continue to be excluded from large segments of the housing market. Families with children often are denied housing simply because they have children. A 1980 HUD national survey found that 26 percent of the nation's rental housing units ban families with children. In California alone, a 1979 survey of five major cities found that 53 to 71 percent of their rental market was closed to families with children. All Americans will benefit from a stronger Fair Housing Law. For all these reasons, we urge you to move quickly on the Fair Housing Amendments Act - HR 1158.

ACORN

Alexandria Low Income Housing Coalition
American Planning Association
Asian Americans for Equality
Association of American University Women
B'nai B'rith Women
Black Women's Agenda
Bucks County Tenants Association
Callahan Neighborhood Association

Housing

Catherine McAuley Housing Foundation
City-Wide Resident Council
Coalition on Human Needs
Common Ground
Community Resources for Independent Living
Congregations United for Housing
CRLA Foundation
EANC Incorporated
Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association
Endeppence Center of Northern Virginia
Fair Housing Contact Service
Family and Children's Service
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Habitat for Humanity of Charlotte, NC
Hamilton Heights Neighborhood Organization, Inc.
Hartford Neighborhood Housing Coalition
Housing Association of Delaware Valley and Philadelphia
Human Development Services of Port Chester, NY
Interfaith Housing
Interfaith Development Corporation Bucks County, PA
Jobs with Peace
Massachusetts Tenants Organization
Michigan Housing Coalition
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association Housing and Redevelopment Officials
National Federation of Housing Counselors
National Neighborhood Coalition
National Womens Political Caucus
National Coalition of the Homeless
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National Leased Housing Association
National Rural Housing Coalition
National Council of Senior Citizens
National Council of LaRaza
National Organization of Women
National Organization of Women - Legal Defense and Education Fund
New York Hispanic Housing Coalition
Northside Preservation Commission
Ohio Housing Coalition
Omaha Housing Authority
Project for Equal Educational Rights (NOW-LDEF)
Riverside County Fair Housing Program
Shared Housing Coalition
Tenants Action Group of Philadelphia
Texas Alliance for Human Need
Trinity Chicago Coalition
Urban League of Greater Hartford
Virginia Task Force
Women and Poverty Project
Women's Legal Defense Fund
Women's Equity Action League

M E M O R A N D U M

FOR: SENATOR PEPPER

FROM: GEORGE H. GREEN
PRESIDENT, MIAMI DADE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

June 16, 1981

After the riots in May 1980, there was a general feeling among the white establishment and the various agencies of government that something should be done for the Black area of Miami to help stabilize the area and give some hope to the people. One of the areas of desperate need is for decent, low cost housing for all people but particularly for the elderly. After some delay a special allocation of 600 housing units was dispensed to Miami by President Carter and HUD Central to be placed in the Black area. Three hundred of these units were immediately taken by Dade County HUD, thus leaving 300 Section 8 units for private development. Of these 300, 150 were already committed to the Shell City predesignated site in the city of Miami. This left just 150 out of the original 600 units available for Black entrepreneurs to bid upon.

After this was accomplished, a N.O.F.A. (Notice of Fund Availability) was published by the Jacksonville area HUD office and bids were invited for 150 elderly units to be located either in the city of Miami or Metropolitan Dade County. There were 18 bids received for these 150 units. Only one was from a Black development group. Everyone seems to have lost sight of the fact that these units were to be located in the Black area with Black entrepreneurs participating. In the past, Latins and Anglos have received all the private development Section 8 units allocated for Miami. It seems that many people wish to retain this policy and keep the Blacks out. Why else would 18 applications go out for these units? Now, of course, we are told that there are to be no housing units at all. For years, no Black development

group bid at all on any Section 8 units and now when they do bid, they are told "sorry, everybody has had their share. There are no more units available; therefore, you cannot have any," and to make the situation even more unbelievable 100 of the 300 Little HUD units have been allocated to Latins in Hialeah and the remaining 200 are scheduled for use primarily in non-Black areas. So what has happened to the 600 units originally promised by President Carter and HUD for Black areas with Black entrepreneurs participating? Blacks are going to receive -0-; absolutely nothing, while 300 units of housing intended for Blacks are going elsewhere.

This is a presidential commitment given because after years of neglect, a real need for decent, low-cost housing was evident. Although administrations have changed, a presidential commitment is a special covenant and should be honored. Somewhere in the United States, these housing units exist and if there is a desire to do what is right and just, they will be issued to fulfill this presidential commitment to the people of Miami. No one in Miami, Washington, or anywhere else can understand why the Secretary of HUD, Mr. Pierce, has twice refused Senator Pepper an appointment to discuss this matter. In his thirty-two years in the Congress, Senator Pepper has championed the rights of all the needy and underprivileged and has served the country with honor. He has never before been refused the courtesy of an appointment with a cabinet member. This is simply a matter of protocol and courtesy, and this refusal is just another strange event in this very unusual situation. We do not believe that the Blacks will accept this situation regardless of what explanation or explanations are given, whether or not they may be legally or administratively accurate. We believe that Blacks will view these explanations as another trick by the administrators of the "system." Whether or not this may or may not be true, the effect is the same--they will receive no housing units. That is the bottom line. In our opinion, the administration is asking the Black people of Miami to answer the following questions: Do we always have to riot to get our just rights and make our presence felt? Are memories so short? Is the current administration actually so

unfeeling? With the situation in Atlanta, Buffalo, and the rest of the country combined with the general cut-back in social programs that so drastically affect Blacks, if a riot started in Miami, it could well spread to other cities and create chaos in our country. We do not say this will happen; we simply do not know. What we do know is that the Black people are restive, insecure, unhappy, and very fearful and somewhat distrustful of the present administration. The Blacks in Miami might be compared to the Everglades when drought conditions prevail. Just one small fire could start a general conflagration. Why anyone would set up such a possible situation is difficult to understand--particularly where a presidential commitment and a promise of the United States government is involved and housing units already assigned, committed and ready to be built have been snatched away so unjustly. Will the economy of the country grind to a halt if these units are restored?

These housing units are being treated by HUD Washington just as if they were regular allocations under the fair share formula and since there are severe cutbacks Blacks in Miami are told "sorry, you are like everyone else. We must all suffer together." This is not true. These units were issued as a special allocation and a commitment of the President of the United States and a promise by the United States government to the Black people of Miami. They were not and are not ordinary, fair share formula units. The Miami Blacks have never had a "piece of the pie" nor have they been treated like everyone else. All the Section 8 private developer units for Miami have gone either to Latins or Anglos and the Blacks have not received a single unit of this housing. On top of this, "the others" have received 300 units that were supposed to be for Blacks and now the Blacks cannot even get one unit of the remaining 300 from the original 600-unit special allocation. In our opinion, they simply are not going to stand for this. These units were specifically promised to the Blacks. They have been taken away by bureaucratic inefficiency and political indifference. The Black people of Miami are tired of broken promises and reasons

why things cannot be done. They want this promise fulfilled and are going to be very vigorous and determined in seeing to it that this unjust situation is rectified. Either the promise of the government and the President of the United States is going to be honored or it is not. If it is not, then it is our opinion that the Black people of Miami are going to react and react vigorously with headlines such as "Reagan takes housing from Black poor," "Reagan takes another slap at Blacks--won't fulfill Carter's promises," and so on. It is our belief that a strong reaction in the national media can be taken as a certainty as already the NAACP, SCLC, CORE, The Congressional Black Caucus, and other Black national organizations are being alerted and will participate if necessary. There is, of course, always the possibility of a far more violent and intense reaction which no one can predict. Why this situation is being allowed to get out of hand like this, we do not know. It seems that no one cares what happens until violence or civil disorder occurs. HUD appears to be taking the position that the Black people of Miami be damned, HUD will do as it wishes. This could very possibly turn out to be an unwise and unfortunate manner to deal with this situation.