

August 15, 1974

RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOUSING

SUBMITTED BY: HONORABLE PARREN J. MITCHELL,
U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.

On August 15, 1974, the House of Representatives passed the Conference Report on S. 3066, the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. On the positive side, this Bill does address itself to the critical housing problems we confront, even if only on a minimal basis. On the negative side, the Bill carries a formula for distribution of funds which, in our opinion, is grossly unfair to urban centers. To mitigate the negative aspects of S. 3066, we make the following recommendations:

a) That \$22,000,000 be placed under HUD management for counseling of tenants in government owned or subsidized housing, such as 235, 236, 221 (D.3), and the 23-H program. At the present time, the government has more than a million units of housing which it subsidizes, in whole or in part. It is nonsensical not to provide counseling services to tenants in such units. The absence of such services can only inevitably result in the rapid physical deterioration of the units. The Office of Management and Budget continues to resist the providing of counseling services at an adequate level. We argue that such resistance is counter-productive to our national housing efforts.

b) That the impounded housing production funds be released immediately. We believe that it is imperative for our government to honor its commitments made to the cities and to citizen groups which spent thousands of manpower hours in planning housing projects, only to find themselves coldly rebuffed and indeed, stopped by the impoundment of housing funds by the prior administration. It is our considered judgement that the 23-H program contained in S. 3066 will benefit primarily senior citizens, not families. Therefore, it is crucial that impounded housing funds be released in their entirety and immediately.

c) That the administration give serious consideration to a program designed to provide employment for tenants in housing subsidized in whole or in part by the Federal government. Unemployment in governmental housing is as high as 90% in most areas. There is no reason why tenants cannot be trained to perform all the duties required for the maintaining of safe, sanitary decent housing. Such a program should anticipate that tenants can be trained to perform any and all jobs; from management to maintenance. It is clear that a combined, cooperative effort on the parts of the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Health, Education, and Welfare and Labor is mandatory for the ultimate success of such an employment program.

d) That the administration recognize that the lack of equal access to suburban housing results in Black citizens being exploited and victimized because unscrupulous realtors know that for as long as

the white noose continues to surround the Cities, Blacks will pay more for housing because they are locked into Cities by covert and overt discrimination in housing. It is urged that this administration demonstrate moral leadership in this area by advocating, promoting and insuring equal housing access to all citizens.

e) The President should give strong, positive leadership in formulating a new policy under which limited dividends may be made available to those non-profit organizations which operate housing, primarily under the 236 housing program.