

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Committee on Financial Services

From: FSC Majority Staff

Date: September 16, 2016

Subject: September 21, 2016, Housing and Insurance Subcommittee Hearing on “The Future of Housing in America: A Better Way to Increase Efficiencies for Housing Vouchers and Create Upward Economic Mobility”

The Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance will hold a hearing entitled “The Future of Housing in America: A Better Way to Increase Efficiencies for Housing Vouchers and Create Upward Economic Mobility” on Wednesday, September 21, 2016, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 2128, Rayburn House Office Building. The hearing will focus on the Housing Choice Voucher Program, the Administration’s Housing Choice Voucher Mobility Demonstration proposal and relevant legislation that would affect the Housing Choice Voucher program.

This will be a one-panel hearing with the following witnesses:

- Ms. Dominique Blom, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Public Housing Investments, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, DC
- Ms. Barbara Sard, Vice President for Housing Policy, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Washington, DC
- Ms. Deborah Thrope, Staff Attorney, National Housing Law Project, San Francisco, CA
- Mr. Ailrick Young, Executive Director, Laurel Housing Authority, Laurel, MS
- Ms. Cheryl Lovell, Executive Director, St. Louis Housing Authority, St. Louis, MO

Background

In the 114th Congress, the Committee on Financial Services has conducted a series of hearings to explore changes to federal housing programs so that they operate more efficiently, with the goal of maximizing the investment of taxpayer

funds to serve more families in a better way. In addition to identifying ways to better manage current programs, the Committee examined how these Federal programs can help low- and very-low income families achieve self-sufficiency and prevent inter-generational dependence on housing assistance.

The Housing Choice Voucher program, commonly referred as “Section 8” or “tenant-based vouchers,” serves approximately 2 million households. While the program was renamed in 1998 to reflect, in part, its focus on enhancing tenants’ ability to choose where they live, there are questions about the program’s effectiveness, including whether assisted families actually experience the mobility needed to relocate to communities where better educational or economic opportunities exist. To provide more opportunities for voucher-holders, on February 9, 2016, the Administration proposed a demonstration program to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of regional mobility programs. According to the Administration, HUD can approve up to 10 regional housing mobility programs established by public housing agencies (PHAs). The mobility programs will allow PHAs to collaborate on initiatives to help low-income families use existing vouchers to move to higher-opportunity neighborhoods. Additionally, H.R. 4816, the Small Public Housing Agency Act of 2016, was introduced on March 22, 2016, with the goal of creating program efficiencies for smaller public housing authorities that manage housing choice vouchers and public housing units.

Witnesses will address whether these two proposals could create greater program efficiency and lead to sustainable economic opportunities for those families that receive federal housing assistance.