



Congress Bails Out Carson Rent Hike

HUD Secretary Ben Carson's plan to increase rents for able-bodied recipients of federal housing subsidies has evaporated, thanks to Congress approving a two-year budget plan boosting housing appropriations.

Carson in April unveiled a budget plan that would have increased the minimum rent for public housing privileges from \$50 to \$150 monthly. Carson contends now that the rationale for the hike was a \$41 billion budget and there wasn't enough money to maintain services at the same level for everyone and the elderly and disabled faced the prospect of rent increases unless an alternative plan was adopted.

Sources say otherwise. They say Carson adopted the rent hike to encourage able-bodied individuals and families to wean themselves from public housing more rapidly. At the time, Carson argued that the current system creates "perverse incentives, including discouraging these families from earning more income and becoming self-sufficient."

The plan has been roiling housing activists and lobbies since then, and the din apparently had its effect on Carson. Congressional approval of a nearly 10% increase in HUD funding through FY 2019 resolved the issue.

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