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HUD To Target Public Housing Illegals

One of the first items on HUD's new agenda will be the status of illegal immigrants living in public housing and/or receiving public subsidies such as Section 8 housing vouchers.

HUD sources tell *HAL* the Trump administration transition team is scouring HUD policies and actions, written and spoken, that allow undocumented non-citizens to receive public subsidies, particularly housing.

Public housing authorities now are required to report to HUD the citizenship status of all members of households receiving federal subsidies who live in public or assisted housing. That means the department has a complete record of potentially ineligible tenants, or at least supposedly has such information in hand.

HUD rules allow illegal immigrants to live in public or assisted housing if at least one member of the household is a U.S. citizen or holds a green card or other documents showing the individual is here legally.

The new Trump administration deportation enforcement policy unveiled by the Homeland Security Department (DHS) opens the door wide for deportation of foreign-born immigrants, whether here legally or illegally, who live in public housing, hold Section 8 housing vouchers, or who live in project-based Section 8 apartments or houses.

The DHS deportation enforcement order includes any people who "have abused any program related to receipt of public benefits." That broad language could apply to public and assisted housing benefits, HUD sources say.

The order also targets those who "have engaged in fraud or willful misrepresentation in connection with any official matter before a governmental agency."

Another possible public housing dilemma emerges. The draft executive order on processing of refugees from the seven listed terrorist nations that President Donald Trump is mulling targets immigrants for deportation who get federal subsidies within five years of arriving in the United States even if they have legitimate documents.

Current law bars immigrants from becoming a "public charge" within five years of arriving. But

HUD relaxed the law's rules in recent years after refugees were awarded economic and housing subsistence on arrival from nonprofit refugee resettlement contractors funded partially by HUD.

The draft executive order contains rule changes dramatically altering policy regarding admissions and deportations of immigrants, upending of personal status designation, and a likely requirement seeking repayment of benefits from sponsors of immigrants.

The DHS orders are also written to encompass all government subsidies -- federal, state and local. Thirty-three states have state-funded public housing programs but the state housing agencies administering the funding also receive federal housing aid.

The reach of the DHS immigrant programs is considerable and, coupled with a deportation executive order including much of what appears in the draft proposal, could put a big dent in public housing programs in principal refugee and immigrant resettlement areas -- Minneapolis, Detroit-Dearborn, MI, and the *Colonias* dotting the U.S. border with Mexico.

Info: See the Enforcement of the Immigration Laws order at www.cdpublications.com/docs/9098 and the Implementing the President's Border Security & Immigration Enforcement order at www.cdpublications.com/docs/9099

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