

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Biden Administration's Support for
Fair Housing Reinforces Local Efforts**

The Fair Housing Center of Southeast & Mid Michigan (FHC) applauds recent statements by the Biden administration that emphasize the importance they will put on supporting efforts that combat housing discrimination and redress the inequities, particularly for African Americans, resulting from this country's history of racist housing policies. With more support from the Federal government, FHC hopes it will be able to accomplish even more locally.

On January 26, President Biden signed an Executive Order entitled "Memorandum on Redressing Our Nation's and the Federal Government's History of Discriminatory Housing Practices and Policies." This was followed, on January 28, by a statement from Acting Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Matthew E. Ammon, that said, among other things, that "racially discriminatory housing practices and policies have kept communities of color from accessing safe, high-quality housing and the chance to build wealth that comes through homeownership. To this day, people of color disproportionately bear the burdens of homelessness, pollution, climate-related housing instability, and economic inequality because of deliberate and systemic efforts to deny them fair and equal access to housing opportunity."

The FHC, a nonprofit organization, offers free investigative services, testing, advice, advocacy, conciliation, attorney referral, and community education in Clinton, Eaton, Hillsdale, Ingham, Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston, Monroe, Shiawassee, and Washtenaw Counties. "Secretary Ammon's statement on the importance of implementing President Biden's Executive Order is a significant change," said Ann Routt, FHC Board Member. "FHC has always worked to educate the community about the effects of racist housing policies, by exposing and eliminating ongoing housing discrimination. We look forward to partnering with the new administration with this strengthened focus."

An important policy change, highlighted in the statements, is a return to a stronger standard for eliminating discriminatory policies. An Obama-era change called the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule took aim at policies that had the effect of exacerbating discrimination, even if the language in them was neutral. Under the Trump Administration, HUD stepped away from this Rule.

“We look forward to seeing how the Administration works towards fully realizing the breadth and scope of the Fair Housing Act,” added FHC Director Pam Kisch. “And we hope the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule can be brought back to its original 2014 intent so that we can better serve the people in our ten-county area.”

Civil rights organizations also [issued a press statement](#) commending the Biden-Harris administration for advancing fair housing and racial equity. Lisa Rice, President and CEO of the National Fair Housing Alliance, wrote “We look forward... to working with the new administration to ensure that housing discrimination is eliminated from our society and that every person has decent, stable, affordable housing in well-resourced communities.”

HUD Press Release: Acting HUD Secretary Statement on President Biden’s Executive Order Redressing Discriminatory Housing Practices and Policies

“President Biden’s [executive order](#) is a vital step toward redressing the federal government’s legacy of housing discrimination and securing equal access to housing opportunity for all.

“Racially discriminatory housing practices and policies have kept communities of color from accessing safe, high-quality housing and the chance to build wealth that comes through homeownership. To this day, people of color disproportionately bear the burdens of homelessness, pollution, climate-related housing instability, and economic inequality because of deliberate and systemic efforts to deny them fair and equal access to housing opportunity.

“Only by recognizing and acknowledging our nation's history of housing discrimination can we begin to lift the barriers to safe, accessible, and affordable housing. With this executive order, President Biden is taking meaningful action to advance racial equity in housing and expand opportunity for all. HUD looks forward to working closely with the President and his administration to expand equitable access to housing for millions of Americans.”

The Fair Housing Center of Southeast & Mid Michigan, founded in 1992, actively protects the civil rights of those who are discriminated against in the rental, sale, or financing of housing through investigation, education, advocacy, and legal action. The FHC takes an average of 180 complaints each year from its ten-county service area – Clinton, Eaton, Hillsdale, Ingham, Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston, Monroe, Shiawassee, and Washtenaw counties.

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