Legislation Text

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Urging the Biden Administration to immediately release the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's "Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing" rule.

WHEREAS, Housing is a human right, and stable and equitable access to high quality housing for all is mandatory for America and Philadelphia to truly thrive; and

WHEREAS, Historically, discriminatory federal, state, and local policies have created systemic barriers that continue to affect millions of marginalized people, especially Black and Brown people, evident through escalating rents, increased evictions, and the elusive dream of homeownership for many Americans. Approximately half of Philadelphia renters and 30% of Philadelphia homeowners are cost-burdened by housing expenses; and

WHEREAS, the Fair Housing Act of 1968 was a landmark federal civil rights bill that protects individuals and families from discrimination in the housing market. Philadelphia's Fair Practices Ordinance, introduced in 1963, protects against unlawful discrimination; and

WHEREAS, The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) published a notice of proposed rulemaking in February 2023 entitled "Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing." The proposed rule would build on and refine HUD's 2015 rule, to faithfully implement the Fair Housing Act's statutory mandate that HUD or any entity that receives federal funding for housing and community development must use those funds and operate their programs in a manner that redresses inequities in the housing system and create inclusive, resource-rich communities that give everyone an opportunity to thrive; and

WHEREAS, the City of Philadelphia's success in completing a 2017 Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) under the 2015 AFFH Rule, and its subsequent update in 2022, underscores a steadfast commitment to the AFFH objectives and facilitates significant community engagement in both the development and implementation of these housing strategies; and

WHEREAS, the 2023 proposed rule took a major step towards creating more equitable and affordable housing opportunities and stronger, more viable neighborhoods. HUD received over 500 public comments on this draft rule, most of which welcomed the rule; and

WHEREAS, By providing a framework for analyzing barriers to housing choice and actively involving communities in the planning process, the AFFH rule enhances local policymaking and ensures that local voices are integral in shaping outcomes; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations enforces the Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance, works to increase equitable access to housing opportunities in Philadelphia by investigating complaints and adjudicating unlawful housing practices in the City. The release of the HUD decision will further equip and support the Commission with the necessary support it needs to accomplish its mission and ensure housing in Philadelphia becomes a human right, experienced by all and equitably distributed; now,

therefore. be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council does hereby call on the Biden Administration to immediately release the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule.