



Durbin, Duckworth press HUD to implement IG recommendations to improve oversight and administration of public housing authorities

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CHICAGO – U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) today pressed the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to quickly implement the HUD Inspector General's (IG) recommendations to improve HUD's oversight and administration of public housing authorities as outlined in the [report](#) that was released yesterday exposing HUD's inadequate oversight of Alexander County Housing Authority (ACHA). The report makes a number of recommendations to improve and clarify its procedures related to taking public housing authorities into receivership, as well as strengthening staff training. Durbin and Duckworth first called for this report in May 2017.

“HUD’s failure to effectively oversee ACHA has contributed to the public housing crisis that has subjected hundreds of residents to unthinkable living conditions and forced many out of their homes and their beloved community. No community should have its access to safe and healthy housing threatened as a result of HUD’s inaction,” wrote Durbin and Duckworth in a letter to HUD Secretary Ben Carson. **“We urge HUD to quickly implement the report’s recommendations to improve its oversight of public housing authorities and request that HUD provide us with an update of its plan to implement these recommendations by no later than September 27, 2018.”**

The report reveals HUD had knowledge of negative living conditions at ACHA since at least 2010, but chose not to exercise its full authority to intervene—as residents continued to be subjected to unsafe and unsanitary living conditions. Further, it reveals that contributing to HUD’s hesitancy to take ACHA into receivership was a prevailing misunderstanding by HUD staff of HUD’s own authority to act.

Yesterday, Durbin and Duckworth issued a statement following HUD IG's release of the report evaluating HUD's oversight of ACHA. Their full statement is available [here](#).

Earlier this month, Durbin [met](#) with HUD IG nominee, Ms. Oliver Davis, and discussed what her goals and priorities would be at HUD, and how the agency can provide greater oversight to ensure public housing residents have safe and healthy living conditions. Duckworth also [met](#) with HUD Inspector General Nominee, and had an extensive conversation about Illinois housing priorities and the need for greater oversight to stop preventable crises like those in Cairo and Thebes, Illinois, from happening again. Last year, Durbin and Duckworth wrote multiple letters to the HUD Inspector General urging his office to complete its investigation into fraud, waste and mismanagement by Alexander County Housing Authority officials.

Full text of the letter is available [here](#) and below:

July 27, 2018

Dear Secretary Carson:

We urge the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to quickly implement the HUD Inspector General's (IG) recommendations to improve HUD's oversight and administration of public housing authorities as outlined in the report we first called for in May 2017 to evaluate HUD's oversight of Alexander County Housing Authority (ACHA).

While acknowledging the role played by ACHA officials in contributing to the housing crisis currently facing residents in Alexander County, the IG report concludes that HUD "could have and should have done more to oversee" ACHA. The report reveals HUD had knowledge of negative living conditions at ACHA since at least 2010, but chose not to exercise its full authority to intervene—as residents continued to be subjected to unsafe and unsanitary living conditions. Further, it reveals that contributing to HUD's hesitancy to take ACHA into receivership was a prevailing misunderstanding by HUD staff of HUD's own authority to act. The report makes a number of recommendations to improve and clarify its procedures related to taking public housing authorities into receivership, as well as strengthening staff training.

HUD's failure to effectively oversee ACHA has contributed to the public housing crisis that has subjected hundreds of residents to unthinkable living conditions and forced many out of their homes and their beloved community. No community should have its access to safe and healthy housing threatened as a result of HUD's inaction.

We urge HUD to quickly implement the report's recommendations to improve its oversight of public housing authorities and request that HUD provide us with an update of its plan to implement these recommendations by no later than September 27, 2018.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that residents of Alexander County are provided with the full assistance of HUD as their lives continue to be impacted by a crisis HUD played a role in creating.