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BREAKING: New HUD Whistleblower Claims Expose Trump Administration's Targeted Attacks on Civil Rights, Warren Calls for Independent Investigation

HUD whistleblower documents provided to Warren's office describe the Administration's systematic attack on fair housing and civil rights enforcement, resulting in possible violations of the law and the withdrawal of hundreds of housing discrimination cases

Whistleblowers detail how the attack on fair housing division leaves HUD unable to fulfill its duties and enforce the Violence Against Women Act

Text of Letter (PDF)

Washington, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Ranking Member of the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee, wrote a letter to Brian Harrison, the Acting Inspector General for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), calling for an independent investigation into troubling allegations from HUD whistleblowers. The claims, which are supported by internal HUD documents, detail how the Trump Administration appears to be violating the law and failing to enforce federal civil rights and fair housing laws. The documents

were provided to Ranking Member Warren by a group of whistleblowers who are attorneys in the HUD General Counsel's Office of Fair Housing (OFH) and the HUD Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO).

“The documents received by my office suggest that HUD leadership has rescinded referrals to the Department of Justice (DOJ) and dropped ‘major investigations and cases concerning alleged housing discrimination and segregation, including some where the agency already found civil rights violations,’” **wrote the Ranking Member.**

These documents also describe that “HUD leadership informed existing OFH staff that ‘fair housing was ‘not a priority’ of the administration, that less civil rights work would be performed under this administration, and that there was an ‘optics problem’ with (OFH) being as large as it was,’” **the Ranking Member Warren continued.**

Ranking Member Warren raised the alarm over the whistleblowers’ description of HUD’s inability to enforce the Violence Against Women Act due to a 75% cut in staff: “These stark and debilitating losses have allegedly decimated institutional knowledge and deprioritize the safety of domestic violence survivors under VAWA, ‘placing survivors in greater danger of suffering additional trauma, physical violence, and even death.’”

Ranking Member Warren relayed the whistleblowers’ allegations of an unusual “gag order” on civil rights staff: “The documents received by my office describe a strict verbal gag order at OFH that has ‘limit[ed] the ability of civil rights work to proceed’ and which ‘other offices inside and outside of OGC have not been subject to.’ Specifically, they report that ‘[t]his order forbids OFH attorney communication with external parties, including DOJ and other governmental agencies, and the parties in civil rights complaints, without express approval from political leadership.’”

The Ranking Member concluded by calling on the HUD OIG to carefully investigate the allegations raised in the letter to determine whether HUD is currently fulfilling its statutory obligations to implement and enforce federal civil rights and fair housing laws.

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