

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 8, 2025

The Honorable Scott Turner
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Secretary Turner:

We write to express our deep concern regarding recent findings that two attorneys within the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) were terminated following their alleged participation in whistleblower disclosures to the media and Members of Congress alleging that your Department's leadership is purposefully neglecting enforcement of the Fair Housing Act and actively interfering with civil rights work. This recent development demands an immediate explanation and corrective action.

According to recent reporting by The New York Times and further corroborated by documentation received by both the House Committee on Financial Services and the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, these terminations are clearly retaliatory against whistleblowers. These actions represent a troubling and illegal abuse of authority. They are also a violation of the transparency and accountability which must guide any federal agency, regardless of party.

As you might be aware, federal law and your Department's own policies prohibit retaliation against employees who engage in protected disclosures, regardless of probation status. The alleged termination of Paul Osadebe and Palmer Heenan, who spoke out about potential civil rights interference from political appointees sends a disturbing message to the American people and other HUD employees that loyalty to the Administration is primary, rather than the Constitution, and the Department's statutory obligations.

Further, the information previously received by House Financial Services Committee Ranking Member Maxine Waters and Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Elizabeth Warren's staff and the assertions made by those attorneys—namely that senior political appointees directed the closure and withdrawal of civil rights investigations, interfered with communications to the Department of Justice, and purposely sidelined Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) staff—deserves intense scrutiny.¹² The claims that these attorneys brought forward was evidently confirmed by HUD's own contingency plan for a shutdown.³ This is clearly misconduct and a systemic failure to enforce the Fair Housing Act.

We therefore demand that you take the following steps without delay:

- 1) Publicly commit to protecting whistleblowers within your department. This includes reinstating Mr. Osadebe and Mr. Heenan pending an independent review of their terminations.

¹²“Ranking Members Maxine Waters and Senator Elizabeth Warren Urge Hill, Scott to Call Up Trump Housing Secretary Turner to Testify Before Congress on Alleged Violations of Fair Housing Laws Exposed by Whistleblowers.” U.S. House Committee on Financial Services Democrats, 30 Sept. 2025, democrats-financialservices.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=413856

² Kamin, Debra. “Trump Appointees Roll Back Enforcement of Fair Housing Laws.” *The New York Times*, 22 Sept. 2025 www.nytimes.com/2025/09/22/realestate/trump-fair-housing-laws.html

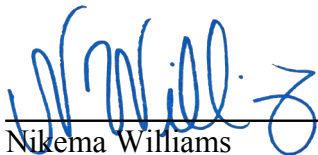
³ “HUD Contingency Plan for Possible Lapse in Appropriations 2025”, 29 Sept., 2025. Pg.17

- 2) Provide a written explanation for the decision to terminate each attorney, including a description of the process used, the rationale for each termination, and an explanation of the extent to which media interviews or internal dissent had a role in the decision.
- 3) Confirm whether HUD leadership has undertaken or when HUD plans to initiate any reviews of the enforcement rollback raised by these attorneys and provide a summary of findings if or when available.
- 4) Detail the steps HUD is taking to ensure the enforcement of the Fair Housing Act is prioritized, and independent from political interference.
- 5) Echoing the letter sent to Chairman French Hill and Chairman Tim Scott from Ranking Member Maxine Waters and Ranking Member Elizabeth Warren, on September 30, 2025, we urge HUD to commit to testify before the House Financial Services Committee and the Senate Banking Committee.

As Members of Congress, we have a constitutional responsibility to oversee the functioning of federal agencies regardless of a lapse of appropriations, or the political landscape is compliant with the law. The allegations that your Department is retaliating against public servants only raise more legitimate concerns. **We request a response to this letter no later than October 21, 2025.**

We urge you to reverse course immediately and reinstate the attorneys in question. The Department must commit to protecting civil rights enforcement. Regardless of the Administration, we can not ignore retaliation against whistleblowers—nor dismantle civil rights protections for a Department whose key duty is to protect and provide housing opportunities for every American citizen.

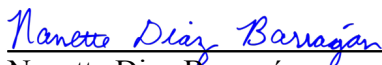
Sincerely,



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



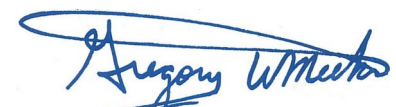
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Wesley Bell
Member of Congress



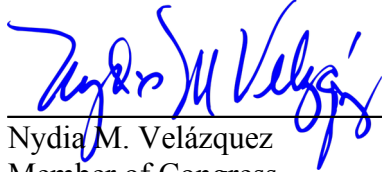
André Carson
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



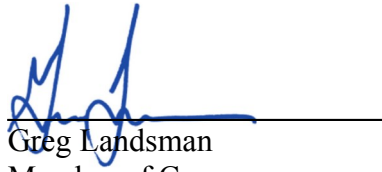
Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



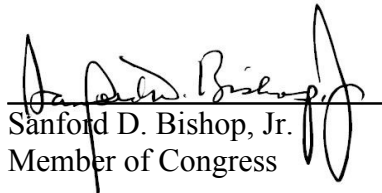
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



LaMonica McIver
Member of Congress



Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



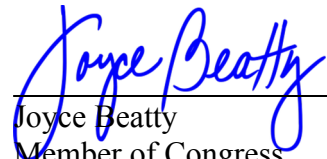
Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress



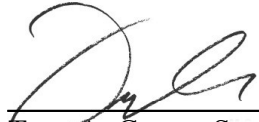
Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress



Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress



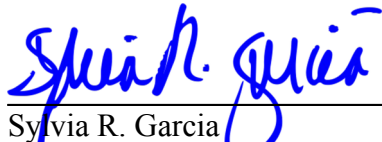
Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



Troy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



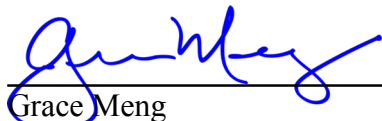
Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



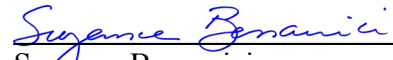
Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



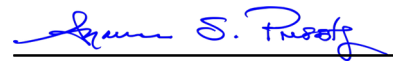
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



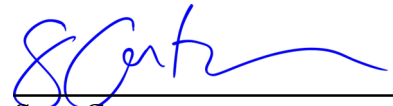
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



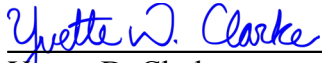
Sean Casten
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress