

Civil Rights Orgs Slap HUD Department With Lawsuit Over Housing Policy

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Various civil rights organizations joined to sue the Department of Housing and Urban Development over its decision to delay a housing policy Monday.

The NAACP Legal Defense Fund and four other groups filed the lawsuit against the department and its secretary, Ben Carson, for halting the implementation of the Small Area Fair Market Rule, [the groups announced in a press release](#).

“The new rule gives families the purchasing power to move to higher-opportunity neighborhoods instead of being confined to segregated and impoverished ones” said Sherrilyn Ifill, LDF President and Director-Counsel. “But the rule doesn’t just open the door to a wider variety of housing choices. Families would also be able to choose better schools, jobs, healthcare, and even better grocery stores. HUD’s delay will needlessly deprive families of access to these staples of stable communities.”

[The Small Area Fair Market Rule](#), part of the Housing Choice Voucher program, would allow poorer families to be able to move into richer neighborhoods. Under the rule, the government would pay more money for those with vouchers to live in higher income neighborhoods and pay less to those who went to live in poor neighborhoods.

HUD decided to pause on implementing the ruling for the next two years, citing a need for more analysis on the **costs and benefits of the rule**. The department said it wanted to wait for a final report before putting the Small Area Fair Market Rule into place.

The groups are arguing that the ruling will bring back segregation to the black community.

“Many years of study and work went into the adoption of this rule, one that promotes greater opportunity in housing choice for low income and minority families and greater residential integration. This challenge to its suspension is crucial to the historical fight for a more integrated society,” said Kristen Clarke, President and Executive Director of the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

A HUD spokesperson told the Intercept that while they usually don’t comment on pending litigation, it’s worth noting that the pause on the policy does not mean that the department has canceled it.

“I gather there are some who believe this is a change of policy, or that it might signal a change in policy, but there is no change in policy,” the spokesperson said.