



Washington, DC--Today, Congressman Olver gave the following opening remarks at the Public and Indian Housing Hearing with Assistant Secretary Sandi Henriquez. Congressman Olver is the Ranking Member on the Appropriations Subcommittee for Transportation, Housing and Urban Development.

Sandi, it is a pleasure to have you with us today. Your appearance comes at an important time. While the recession technically ended over a year and a half ago, hundreds of thousands of families continue to struggle with the burden of underwater mortgages and a weak job market. As the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Public and Indian Housing, you are in an important position to help families facing foreclosure and to make capital investments in housing infrastructure that creates jobs.

I am particularly pleased to see that your fiscal year 2012 budget request strongly addresses the increased demand for housing assistance that stems from continuing high unemployment rates and the millions of foreclosures in the last three years. Specifically the budget provides notable increases for the tenant-based section 8 program and fully funds this housing assistance programs.

Furthermore, the capital investments provided throughout HUD's budget, including the Public Housing Capital Fund and Native American Block Grants, create jobs that are vital to sustaining our economic recovery and I hope you can enlighten us on the categories of such jobs.

The budget request also provides \$250 million for the revitalization of distressed neighborhoods through the Choice Neighborhoods proposal. This subcommittee has long been a proponent of the proposals predecessor, HOPE VI, and I looking forward to discussing the recent announcement that six cities have been selected to compete for the initial FY10 Choice Neighborhood demonstration awards.

Finally, I look forward to discussing your proposal to recapture \$1 billion in operating funds from public housing authorities. In particular, how HUD's recent clarification of eligible operating activities will impact the ability to perform this recapture and how this will impact strategies PHA's have employed to leverage these funds.

Sandi, in closing, it is my view that this budget request allows HUD to contribute to our economic recovery. I greatly appreciate your leadership over the past two years and am committed to working with you towards our shared goal of providing adequate affordable housing. However, I am greatly concerned that the appalling 302b allocation that was agreed to yesterday by this Committee's majority will counter your efforts. In fact, your office exemplifies the choice presented by the allocation – whether to throw low-income tenants on to the streets or to defer capital expenditures and allow federal housing investments to deteriorate. In my opinion, neither is good for our country.

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