

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 29, 2024

Adrienne Todman
Acting Secretary
Department of Housing & Urban
Development
451 7th St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20410

Demetria McCain
Principal Deputy Secretary for Fair Housing
& Equal Opportunity
Department of Housing & Urban
Development
451 7th St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20410

Dear Acting Secretary Todman and Principal Deputy Secretary McCain:

We write today to urge the Department of Housing and Urban Development to strengthen efforts to combat housing discrimination by translating housing discrimination reporting resources into Tagalog. We are supportive of the Department's efforts thus far in translating its discrimination reporting forms into languages other than English, and we ask that you further expand the reach of these critically important resources.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development reported 11,741 *Fair Housing Act* complaints during the 2022 fiscal year.¹ However, many cases of housing discrimination go unreported as violations can be difficult to identify or document, and limited English proficiency (LEP) can be a further barrier to reporting violations. Because so many cases go unreported,² we do not truly know the breadth of housing discrimination in our communities, and we are unable to assist many victims facing discrimination.

On August 11, 2000, President Clinton signed Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency," requiring Federal agencies to identify the need for services for LEP individuals and implement systems that provide meaningful access

¹ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "FY 2022 State of Fair Housing Annual Report," 2023, [https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/FHEO/documents/FHEO Annual Report FY 2022.pdf](https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/FHEO/documents/FHEO%20Annual%20Report%20FY%202022.pdf).

² National Fair Housing Alliance, "What Is Housing Discrimination and How Can I Report It?" August 30, 2022, <https://nationalfairhousing.org/what-is-housing-discrimination/>.

to those services.³ We commend the Department's dedication to improving access for LEP individuals by providing online and paper housing discrimination reporting resources in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, Somali, Arabic, and Khmer, and by offering translation services over the phone. However, the Department's 2021-2026 Language Access Plan highlighted a recent self-assessment and review that confirmed Tagalog was one of the most frequently encountered non-English languages by HUD personnel,⁴ yet the Department has not translated housing discrimination reporting resources to Tagalog, including form HUD-903.1.⁵

The Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) community specifically has the highest level of language assistance need out of any race or ethnicity category, with about one-third of the 24 million AANHPIs having limited English proficiency.⁶ Within the AANHPI community, approximately 2 million people in the United States speak Tagalog, most of whom are of Filipino descent. As of 2019, 39% of Filipino Americans are renters, and housing costs account for nearly 30% of their household income on average. Further, increased discrimination and racist attacks targeted towards AANHPIs, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, have made these communities even more vulnerable to housing discrimination. The Federal government should commit all necessary resources to continue to fight housing discrimination in our communities.

That is why we respectfully ask that the Department provide online and mail-in housing discrimination reporting resources in Tagalog. Additionally, we ask that you provide these resources in Ilocano, a widely spoken Philippine language, including in Hawai'i where 85% of the Filipino population is from Ilocos⁷. The federal government has a responsibility to ensure equitable access to Federal resources so the Department can provide assistance to all those who need it.

The Department's thorough Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) allegation processes are crucial to delivering justice for victims of housing discrimination. These include conducting an investigation, helping parties resolve allegations through a Conciliation Agreement or a Voluntary Compliance Agreement and monitoring compliance with such agreements, and when necessary, taking legal action free of cost to the victim(s). These actions prevent retaliation and

³ "Executive Order 13166." U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, Updated 21 Nov. 2022, <https://www.justice.gov/crt/executive-order-13166>.

⁴ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "HUD Language Access Plan." *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Language Access Plan*, https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/FHEO/documents/HUD_Language_Access_Plan.pdf.

⁵ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Report Housing Discrimination." *HUD Form 903 Complaint*, <https://portalapps.hud.gov/FHEO903/Form903/Form903Start.action>.

⁶ AAPI Data, "State of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders in the United States." 1 June 2022, <https://aapidata.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/State-AANHPIs-National-June2022.pdf>.

⁷ "University of Hawaii-Manoa, Center For Philippine Studies". Archived from the original on August 9, 2007, <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/philippine-studies/hawaii-filipinos.html>.

future discrimination while delivering justice for victims including, but not limited to, compensation for damages and access to housing.

We appreciate your continued commitment to combating housing discrimination. By offering reporting resources in Tagalog, HUD will provide more equitable access to housing and empower Filipino Americans to receive justice for damages when their rights are violated. Moreover, by improving reporting methods, both HUD and lawmakers would be able to strengthen our understanding of housing discrimination as it affects communities who may not have had the resources to report it in the past. This will better inform the work of both the Department and Congress.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



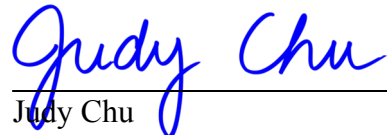
Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



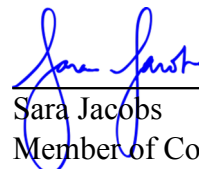
Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Ed Case
Member of Congress



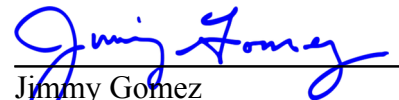
Bonnie Watson Coleman
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Shri Thanedar
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