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HUD LAUNCHES WEBSITE TO GATHER PUBLIC COMMENT ON FIRST-EVER LGBT HOUSING DISCRIMINATION STUDY

Online 'suggestion box' seeks to inform HUD on design of historic research

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development today launched a **new website** to allow citizens to offer comment on the design of an unprecedented national study that will examine housing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. While there have been no national assessments of housing discrimination targeting the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) community, there is a body of evidence suggesting this sort of bias exists.

HUD recently hosted town hall meetings in Chicago, San Francisco and New York City to solicit feedback on how it might approach such ground-breaking research. This **'online suggestion box'** is intended to offer the public throughout the U.S. an opportunity to comment on HUD's study.

"It is critical that as we embark on this historic discrimination study, that we hear from those who may have been denied housing based on their sexual orientation or gender identity," said Dr. Raphael Bostic, HUD's Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research. "The comments we received in our town hall meetings, and those we will gather from this new website, will help inform how we might test for housing discrimination in the sale or rental of housing based on LGBT status."

While there are no national assessments of LGBT housing discrimination, there are state and local studies that have shown this sort of bias. For example, Michigan's Fair Housing Centers found that nearly 30 percent of same-sex couples were treated differently when attempting to buy or rent a home (www.fhcmichigan.org/images/Arcus_web1.pdf).

HUD's new LGBT website will seek suggestions on how best to execute the study. For example, how would a 'tester' signal in a conversation with a landlord that an individual or couple was LGBT? The website is not designed for users to lodge complaints about a particular incident. However, if you believe you have been a victim of housing discrimination, you may **file an online complaint**, or call HUD's Housing Discrimination Hotline at 1-800-669-9777.

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HUD is the nation's housing agency committed to sustaining homeownership; creating affordable housing opportunities for low-income Americans; and supporting the homeless, elderly, people with disabilities and people living with AIDS. The Department also promotes economic and community development and enforces the nation's fair housing laws. More information about HUD and its programs is available on the Internet at www.hud.gov and espanol.hud.gov.

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