TESTIMONY OF
PAUL DAVIDOFF
ON BEHALF OF
AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING
OF THE
SENATE BANKING AND CURRENCY COMMITTEE
JULY 27, 1967

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Paul Davidoff and I am Director of the Graduate Urban Planning Program at Hunter College of The City University of New York. I serve as Review Editor of the Journal of the American Institute of Planners. I have served recently as a consultant to the United States Civil Rights Commission and to the Center for Urban Education in New York City.

At this time of great crisis in our urban centers and on behalf of Americans for Democratic Action I thank the Sub-committee for permitting ADA to testify on the Housing Legislation now before the Sub-committee.

Everything said here today is given special meaning by the events taking place in our cities. The wanton destruction of life and of property which arises out of desperation of ghetto life is a tragic reminder of the violence to which men resort. In speaking today of the housing problem, ADA is concerned for the welfare of the vast majority of residents of ghettos who oppose and are hurt by the riots and who look in vain for their government to provide the opportunities which will enable them to share in the affluence which our society bestows on the majority.

ADA has a number of solutions to offer to the nation's housing problems. The solutions which ADA has proposed in the past, federal support behind a program to provide for an annual construction of at least two million housing units a year of which hundreds of thousands would be for low income families, have not been looked on with favor by Congress. ADA comes before this Sub-committee in a somber and pessimistic mood. If our words are strong, it is because of the descent from the promises of

the Great Society to the acceptance of the socially, as well as, physically polluted urban society of the riot torn present.

In presenting our testimony regarding new housing legislation, ADA starts from the premise that the cause of the ugly urban condition in our society is social and economic injustice. There is tendency in the nation now to examine urban problems as if they were distinct from national domestic problems. But the fact is that the root of most of the conditions afflicting urban areas is national acceptance of poverty and discrimination.

The yearly discussions of marginal shifts in emphasis in approaches to housing as well as other functional areas would appear to an outsider as a ritualism conducted for the purpose of demonstrating social motion in an essentially motionless state. There can be no cures for our urban problems until we are willing to eradicate the causes of poverty and discrimination by assuring to all the opportunity for full employment, decent income, decent shelter, good health and a sound education.

In 1948 Robert Weaver, now Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, wrote The Negro Ghetto. A conclusion he reached at that time about the national housing problem still holds true today. Weaver wrote:

> "The housing problem of minorities can never be solved or materially lessened until the nation has an effective program for meeting adequately the shelter requirements of all the people. This will require a stable economy with high level of employment and a more equitable distribution of income. As long as there is poverty, so long will there be a serious national housing problem."

The rhetoric of the early 60's raised hope that the United States was about to undertake a major effort to equalize opportunities. Now it appears that our decade will go down in history as a time in which men thought about eliminating inequality and then shrank away from the task.

During the past year the rejection of federal responsibility for creating

conditions of equity in society have been particularly strong. This is manifested in two concepts underlying some of the major housing proposals now before your Subcommittee. The first of these is the notion that the private market, which in the past has shown little concern for establishing equality of opportunity, can be stimulated to join in the war on poverty. The stimulus required, large scale tax credits to participating enterprises. ADA questions whether this represents the most direct way to redistribute public resources in order to reduce social and economic disparities.

The second manifestation of contemporary willingness to reject the drive toward establishing an equitable society is seen in the apartheid-like doctrine of "rebuilding ghettos". A year ago Congress refused to support the requirements of open occupancy. Now voices far stronger than the advocates of "black power" are calling for legislation that would force beneficiaries of federal aid to accept residence in areas mapped for poor people, areas which are commonly recognized as deteriorated.

In considering the issue of what type of housing legislation is required in the nation, Americans for Democratic Action has been guided in the past by the national housing goal adopted by Congress in 1949, "A decent home in a suitable living environment for every American family." But now ADA is beginning to question the effectiveness of its support for a goal the achievement of which has been almost a matter of indifference to Congress. As will be observed in greater detail later, Congress has never deemed it essential to require that families dislocated from their dwellings because of urban renewal or other federally supported programs be relocated to "a suitable living environment."

ADA now believes that it might be advisable for Congress to adopt a realistic housing goal. A goal which truly sets forth public policy regarding housing. Such a goal would read as follows:

<u>A decent home in a suitable living environment for some American families. A decent home in an unsuitable living environment for some other</u>

Americans. An indecent home in an unsuitable living environment for many other Americans.

We assert that this is in fact our national goal. We find that neither the Executive nor the Legislative Branch have established any program to alter this goal in the foreseeable future. We challenge the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and members of Congress to demonstrate how the existing federal housing program is doing anything other than implementing the national housing goal as we just defined it.

The great dismay that Americans for Democratic Action feels regarding the minuscule resources proposed to solve the nation's tremendous housing problem might be assuaged if for solving the nation's housing problem a time-table were established by the Secretary of HUD or by Congress.

As it did last year, ADA requests Congress to direct the Secretary of HUD to recommend how the 1949 national housing goal can be realized by some specified time in the not too distant future. If the Secretary of HUD reported back to Congress before January 1, 1968, it would then be possible for Congress to review housing proposals in terms of their ability to work toward the achievement of the national housing goal.

In reviewing the legislative proposals currently before this committee, Americans for Democratic Action finds little to alter our belief that there is no strong desire on the part of Congress to alter the real national objective of maintaining indecent housing and unsuitable living conditions for many American families.

In 1960 over seven million dwelling units were classified as substandard. Many millions of Americans in poverty pay far more than they can afford for their housing shelter. Many who live in what are called decent dwellings reside in areas that cannot be considered as suitable living environments. Such areas are often those that have been designated as blighted. The national housing problem is immense.

It is against this picture of housing needs that we must examine the worth of the proposals before this Congress. We seriously question whether the proposals that have

been introduced are capable of reducing to any measurable degree the nation's housing problem.

In reaching its conclusion, ADA would not wish to be understood to be saying that the many proposals for increasing the ability of moderate and low income families to own homes are bad. We believe that the passage of legislation enabling a relatively few more Americans to own homes is nice. But we do not believe that they are particularly relevant to meeting the housing needs of millions of Americans families living in poverty.

Despite the fact that the housing proposals currently before this Sub-committee do not begin to face up to the need for a major allocation of federal resources for low income housing. ADA does strongly endorse the theory made explicit in a number of the bills before the Sub-committee that the FHA should greatly extend its coverage to low and moderate families. ADA commends and fully supports the remarks of Senator Mondale made at the time he introduced the Home Purchase Assistance Act. On that occasion Senator Mondale stated that his bill was "a charge to the FHA to take whatever risks are necessary in order to put low and moderate income families in decent housing."

Senator Mondale went on to state that "as many as 7.5 million families in America could qualify under this program." But ADA's reluctance to give enthusiastic support to this proposal rests on the fact that it proposes that only 100,000 families be afforded the benefit of legislation during the first year. Simple arithmetic will show that at that rate of expenditure it would take decades for the legislation to reach a majority of its potential beneficiaries. The same conclusion must be reached in reviewing the proposals of Senators Clark, Percy, and Ribicoff.

If this nation is to do more than maintain its promise that many Americans will live in indecent houses in unsuitable living environments, then annual appropriations in support of low-cost housing must be a minimum of a few billion dollars.

Senator Percy's proposal for establishing a National Home Ownership Act represents an innovation in thinking about national housing techniques. As one of a large number

of adequately supported tools for solving the problem it would be worth testing. Standing virtually alone without a strong public housing and rent supplement program associated with it, it would be an uncertain program not reaching the needs of families in poverty. A major drawback to it as a major part of a national housing program is the fact that the results it would produce would be unkown; there would be no guarantee that a specified number of low income families would be reached in a given year. ADA believes that the national need in housing at this time is for a large number of units of decent housing available to low income families. We do not believe that the objective of home ownership is as important. As between reaching a larger number of families with rental housing or a smaller number with ownership housing, we would strongly support the former. Thus we would recommend that Senator Percy consider amending his bill so as to enable the proposed Home Ownership Loan Fund to make loans in support of rental housing.

We come now to the recently introduced proposal of Senator Robert Kennedy for Investment in Housing in Urban Poverty Areas. ADA has had insufficient time to study this complex legislative proposal thoroughly. However, we do have a few comments to make. Like Senator Percy's proposal, this bill would yield an uncertain number of dwelling units each year. Unless tied to other programs which give more complete assurance to the total number of new low cost units to be added to the national housing stock, it would be risky, at least in the years before more experienced predictions could be made, to have this as the major piece of housing legislation to serve the needs of low income families.

An outstanding feature of Senator Kennedy's proposal is the number of dwelling units predicted to be constructed during a single year. In introducing this legislation, Senator Kennedy referred to a volume of between 300,000 and 400,000 units to be constructed in the first year as a result of the federal incentives established. Thus, this is the one proposal before the Sub-committee which suggests a quantity of units approaching a level ADA believes to be required if we are to begin to crack the

problem of providing adequate shelter for all Americans. But, as we said before, the real output might be considerably less than the possible volume.

One difficulty ADA finds in the legislation as described by Senator Kennedy is the possibility that the monthly rentals required may be so high as to price units out of the reach of most families classified as living in poverty. Should this proposal result in rentals too high for families earning under $4,000 annually, then ADA would have strong reservations about its utility in helping to solve the national housing problem.

ADA has one major criticism of both the Kennedy and Percy proposals and it will be discussed in the nest section.

Rebuilding of the Ghetto

As disturbing to Americans for Democratic Action as Congress's indifference to funding a major attack on the housing problem, is the growing conviction amongst opinion makers that low income families, particularly Negroes, should be and can only be rehoused in ghetto areas. A year ago Congress refused to pass a bill that would help to make it possible for Negroes to challenge discrimination in the sale and rental of housing outside the ghetto through Federal guarantees of fair housing practices. Subsequently and increasingly housing policy has dictated establishment of a closed society. It has become quite common to hear individuals concerned with housing problems and urban problems in general to recommend that ghettoes should be rebuilt. The Model Cities program has been called a means for rebuilding the ghettoes and it does not appear at this time as if the Department of Housing and Urban Development is adverse to permitting cities to use their Model Cities funds for that purpose. Frankly ADA is appalled by this thoughtless acceptance upon the part of so many of the concept of a ghetto. A ghetto is a place where people are forced to live. It is a social condition alien to everything America is supposed to stand for. Ghettoes do not deserve rebuilding, they deserve destruction.

In his 1967 preface to the recently reprinted "The Negro Ghetto", Robert Weaver

Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development said this about ghettos:

"When The Negro Ghetto was published, there has been occasional references to black ghettoes. The use of the term 'Negro ghetto', however, was almost unprecedented. Today the concept of the Negro ghetto is accepted in the literature on racial relations. It has become the symbol of involuntary racial residential segregation and the deprivations that harrass the occupants of these enclaves of Urban America."

Americans for Democratic Action believes strongly that every family should be given a choice of where to live. Given a free choice within their means, many present residents of ghetto areas might choose to live outside of the ghetto. Many would prefer to remain within the area in which they presently live. We believe that low income families who want to remain within an area in which they are presently forced to live should be enabled to remain where they are. But we strongly object to all legislative proposals that would limit the area in which low income families can live to existing ghetto areas.

We recognize that the advocates of black power believe that the Negro in America will only get his fair share of political and economic power if the Negroes remain together. ADA in no way opposes the right of black power advocates to persuade Negroes to remain together. We strongly object to federal legislation that would require it.

We believe that those who call for the rebuilding of ghettoes are often confused by urban development objectives. One, the objective of assisting low income families. Two, the objective of improving run down urban areas. Frequently the second objective is given primacy over the more important first objective. When this happens the resident of the low income area often becomes a means for achieving a desired end for the physical area. We believe that this is a perversion of social policy.

Commenting on the current national craze for ghettoes that brilliant American philosopher and civil rights leader, Bayard Rustin, has recently written, in a paper prepared for the 50th Anniversary meeting of the American Institute of Planners:

"Many of the proposals which have been made to improve the ghetto seem to center around the need to renovate them and make them more habitable. I find myself in basic disagreement with this approach. The problem of the ghetto cannot be solved with scotch tape, string and paste. It is a problem which needs to be attacked radically, which is to say, from the roots. Therefore, rather than to attempt to improve the ghetto, what we need to do is tear it down, physically and spiritually. We ought to make it possible for many people who up until now have been forced to live there to move out into new towns and communities and neighborhoods; we ought to make it possible for some to make a voluntary decision to remain there; and we ought to make it possible for others who are now living outside to move in without fear of feeling degraded. Let us not forget the fundamental nature of the ghetto; no amount of repairing can remove from it the stigma of what society says it is -- a reservation in which to keep the people who the larger society does not care to associate with and whose problem it has no interest in dealing with.

"The people who are most overcome by the spirit of the ghetto are the young people, those bursting with optimism, hope, and a sense of possibility, but who are forced to make a truce with the reality that there is nowhere outside for them to go. The result is that they convene on themselves and on their own neighbors with self-destructive frustration violence. We cannot afford to preserve in any form an environment that breeds such bitterness, such despair . . .

The mental health of young Negroes in the ghettoes is therefore essentially the mental health of someone who is actually imprisoned, and if we are going to liberate hundreds and thousands of young, pent-up, frustrated minds into the optimism and open air of the American dream, then we have got to abolish the institution of the ghetto, not refurbish it. Ghettoes have no place in the spirit which for centuries we have been told is the spirit of America."

While sympathetic to many of the objectives Senator Percy seeks to achieve in the National Homeownership Foundation Act, Americans for Democratic Action is completely opposed to the limitation of that act to ghetto areas. The listing of the purposes of the National Homeownership Foundation Act illustrates the confusion in urban development objectives we referred to earlier. The first purpose of the act is said to be "to promote the improvement of the declining urban and rural areas of the nation." The second objective is said to be "to encourage the provision of decent housing for the inhabitants of those areas." This bill assumes that residents of declining urban and rural areas wish to remain within those areas. But for many this is not the case. ADA strongly urges Senator Percy to consider amending his proposal so as not to limit the beneficiaries of the Homeownership Foundation Act to those who would remain within the declining areas of the nation. ADA can see no reason why the Act as Senator Percy has proposed it could not be amended to enable the non-profit National Homeownership Foundation to encourage the provision of decent housing for low income families in any area where they might obtain access to low cost housing. Large supplies of housing which could be rehabilitated at relatively low cost under the Percy proposal are in areas outside declining areas. If, as Americans for Democratic Action believes should be the case, the primary purpose of housing legislation is to enable low income families to enjoy decent housing in areas of <u>their</u> choice. Then the objective declining urban and rural areas of the nation should not be given primacy.

ADA believes that any legislation requiring low income families to find housing in only certain limited areas of the nation is open to attack on 14th Amendment grounds. We believe that legislation limiting low income families to ghetto areas is a reestablishment of the "separate but equal" facilities theory. While assuredly it was not intended as such, the Percy-Kennedy proposal as it now stands comes close to reestablishing forms of racial zoning that the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional decades ago.

ADA supports the National Commission Against Discrimination in Housing findings about the effects of ghetto life.

"The ghetto system, nurtured both directly and indirectly by Federal power, has created racial alienation and tensions so explosive that the crisis in our cities now borders on catastrophe. It has excommunicated Negro and other minority group citizens from membership in the American community. It has isolated the white majority inside a world of conscious and subconscious racism."

The Commission goes on to state that "every day Federal money and power are used to build racial ghettoes. Federal benefits are creating community patterns and conditions in the housing supply which build in segregation. Federal agencies allow municipalities to select sites for federally-aided low-cost housing in areas where segregation is foreordained. FHA continues doing business with discriminatory builders, lenders, and real estate brokers. Urban renewal and highway projects destroy integrated neighborhoods and swell the ghettoes. Federal loans and grants are poured into restricted white suburban communities for schools, hospitals, water and sewer systems and other facilities. Government installations and plants with Federal contracts locate in areas where employment opportunities are cancelled out by racial barriers to housing."

I request permission at this point to insert into the Record following ADA's presentation the complete text of the pamphlet from which these passages were taken, "HOW THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BUILDS GHETTOES," by the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing, which was published in February of this year. We believe that NCDH's documentation of the results of federal practices in the area of ending housing discrimination is compelling, and is of particular interest to Congress as it debates the new housing legislation.

This material again underlines the need for national policy to break down, not strengthen, the walls of the ghetto.

We therefore urge that Senator Percy immediately amend his proposal so as to

eliminate all references to specified and limited areas in which low income families may benefit from loans from the proposed National Home Ownership Foundation.

For the same reason, Americans for Democratic Action urges that Senator Robert Kennedy amend his bill for "investment in housing in urban poverty areas" so as to delete the requirements that the bill benefit only areas presently marked as urban poverty areas. In introducing his housing bill to the Senate, Senator Kennedy said, "the immediate need is for decent and dignified conditions where people now live." We respectfully, but firmly, disagree. The need now, as it always has been, is to enable people to live where they wish to live.

I quote from Senator Robert Kennedy's words of a year and a half ago (speech noted in the Congressional Record of February 2, 1966): "If we can break down the massive housing segregation of the ghetto, we can break down the other forms of segregation which it has caused. The ghetto, for example, makes it practically impossible to achieve meaningful racial balance in the schools....Our course of action must be twofold --- giving the Negro complete freedom of choice of neighborhood...We must consider any and all steps that would encourage metropolitan planning and action towards housing desegregation."

ADA commends Senator Kennedy's entire speech, as printed in the Record of that date, to the subcommittee's attention.

ADA is devoting a great deal of attention to the subject of ghetto rebuilding because we believe it perverts everything that American equality stands for.

Rebuilding ghettoes can only lead to developing further racial segregation in the public schools. Recognizing this great difficulty facing the nation in terms of the question of racial intergration in the school, at this late date serious attention could be given to those plans for housing that would further exacerbate the degree of isolation of Negroes from Whites in the public school system.

Once again let it be understood that Americans for Democratic Action is not demanding that the Negroes be required to leave the areas in which they presently

reside. We are only asking that they be afforded the opportunity to choose whether they may remain or whether they leave.

In a revealing survey on the attitudes of the residents of Harlem, John Kraft Inc., found, and this is reported in Part 6 of the hearings held last year on "The Federal Role in Urban Affairs, "For example, when Harlem residents were asked where they'd prefer to live, if they had to move: Just 17 percent said 'in Harlem.' None volunteered that they'd like to see their children live in Harlem when they grew up."

The Kraft survey was prepared for Edward Logue's study group on Housing for Mayor Lindsay in 1966. These findings are forceful evidence that continued residence in the ghetto is not desired by a sizeable number of present ghetto residents.

Toward a National Urban Development Policy

The issue we have just been discussing, that of ghetto revitalization, suggests that there is a very clear linkage between housing, jobs and income and education. Americans for Democratic Action believes that it is time that an urban development policy was established nationally, one which would link together the key factors. We believe that in dealing with them separately for legislative purposes, quite frequently policies are made in one area without consideration given to the effects in other areas. For example, and as just illustrated, housing policy may strongly affect educational policy. Or, as is frequently the case, housing policy may affect job opportunities. Our analysis of contemporary dealing with the ghetto rebuilding and with creation of jobs in the ghetto is at variance with larger national economic developments. We find that those policies that would limit the Negro to present ghetto areas in fact deny him the opportunity to compete more equally with Whites. Our research indicated that while Negroes are moving to center cities, jobs are moving at a mass rate to the suburbs.

Dorothy K. Newman of the Division of Economic Studies, Bureau of Labor

Statistics, in the May, 1967 issue of Monthly Labor Review, has given an exceptionally clear presentation of the fact that new jobs in urban areas are being developed in communities which contain few Negroes. And Neil Newton Gold of the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing has shown in a number of studies, particularly in studies for the St. Louis Model Cities Agency, that unskilled and semi-skilled jobs are opening in precisely those areas where housing markets are closed to Negroes. In the years from 1962 to 1965, 3,000 new jobs were created in the City of St. Louis; in the County of St. Louis, which includes a number of suburban jurisdictions, 53,000 new jobs were created. Thus, Negro unemployment mounts in the central cities while jobs in the suburbs remain vacant. The NCDH studies maintain that sound anti-poverty policies and sound economic policies for metropolitan areas with high center-city unemployment and high job vacancies in suburbs must begin by enabling Negroes to find job and housing opportunities in the suburbs.

An exceptionally clear presentation of the fact that new jobs in urban areas are being developed in areas other than where Negroes are migrating, Dorothy K. Newman, of the Division of Economic Studies, Bureau of Labor Statistics, in the May 1967 issue of Monthly Labor Review, has shown that sound economic development in regard to providing job opportunities for Negroes as well as for meeting the job requirements of new suburban industries calls for a policy enabling the central city Negro to find jobs in the suburbs. And Neil Gold of the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing has shown in a number of studies, and in particular in studies in St. Louis that sound anti-poverty policy and sound economic policy for the region calls for enabling the central city Negro to find job opportunities in the suburbs. ADA believes that the creation of a national urban development policy is urgently required so that the consideration of local educational, employment and housing policy can be related federal needs and policies.

ADA suggests that in the housing legislation recommended by this committee, that the President be called upon to establish a national urban development policy committee to be comprised of the Secretaries of Commerce, HUD, Transportation and HEW, plus such

other members of the Cabinet as he deems appropriate. Such committee would be required to make recommendation to the President no later than March 1st, of 1968 in regard to appropriate national urban development policy to spur the elimination of poverty and to generate equality of opportunity in housing, education and employment. Such a policy would provide a base against which new recommendations in the separate functional areas might be tested in the future.

Specific Housing Legislation Recommendations for 1967

To carry out a policy of providing equal opportunity in housing, jobs, and education, a first specific step would be to enable existing and proposed housing agencies to build, acquire, or sponsor low cost housing units throughout metropolitan areas. For example, instead of limiting Senator Percy's proposed National Home Ownership Foundation loans to "declining urban and rural areas," we should encourage the formation of non-profit housing associations, borrowing from the Foundation, who would rehabilitate, buy, or construct housing in suburbs as well as in core cities. The Model Cities program for St. Louis provides for the establishment of such an non-profit housing corporation. That corporation is to make available three to five thousand dwelling units annually, outside the central city, for present central city residents.

As in previous years Americans for Democratic Action recommends that Congress adopt a large scale housing program for low income and moderate income families. Such a program would include large allocation of federal funds for public housing and for rent supplement. Additionally it would call for major outlays for the development of new cities which cities would include specified opportunities for large numbers of low income families. Believing it doubtful that such legislative recommendation will be adopted by the 90th Congress, ADA would like to go on record as making a number of recommendations for specific alterations in present housing policy which could be accomplished with no major allocation of federal funds this session. These recommendations, after becoming legislation, could sharply alter the character of housing

available for minority, economic and racial groups within the nation. The recommendations we are about to make are similiar to those made by ADA a year ago but not acted upon, as yet, by Congress.

1. Elimination of Tax Depreciation for Owners of Sub-standard Buildings

Last year ADA recommended that a new sub-section J of Section 167 of the Internal Revenue Code be adopted. This sub-section which was drafted by Mr. Richard Hatch and Mr. Leon Friedman of the Architect Renewal Committee of Harlem, (ARCH) reads as follows:

"No depreciation deduction shall be allowed to any taxpayer owning a housing accomodation other than a single family residence occupied by the owner thereof" if for a period of thirty days or more during the tax year such accomodation is certified by any governmental agency having jurisdiction to be a fire hazard or in a continued dangerous condition or detrimental to life or health."

It is our understanding that a proposal similar to this has been offered both in the Senate and in the House. We urge adoption of such an amendment as a major means for eliminating the large tax benefits accruing to owners of houses which fail to provide minimum standards of decency toward their residents. We urge that the members of this sub-committee give strong backing to such an amendment this session.

2. Relocation Practices

Continued failure by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to require equitable relocation practices in urban renewal has added fuel to the fire of protest within the urban ghetto. In Newark for example, the proposed dislocation of large numbers of Negroes residents of the center of the city in order to make way for a new medical school was one of the causes behind the desperate feeling of the Negroes of that city. Relocation would never have been viewed as such a threat had the federal housing program provided opportunity for relocatees to gain access to both a decent home and a suitable living environment.

In the city of Louisville, Kentucky where many Negro residents feel the Federal

Housing Program has denied them access to large areas of the city surrounding region, "we shall not be moved" movement has been started in opposition to renewal location. The administrative regulation of the Department of Urban Development require that relocatees be afforded opportunities for housing areas previously not open to minority groups. But this regulation is seldom enforced by the Department.

ADA believes that relocation could be a major means for bringing about opportunity for gaining access to decent housing in a suitable living environment if the Department of Urban Development were required to enforce standards assuring that relocatees were in fact guaranteed housing opportunities throughout the jurisdiction in which they live.

Thus ADA would recommend that the relocation standards in Section 105 C of the Housing Act of 1949 be amended so as to provide assurance that all relocatees are guaranteed a decent home in a suitable living environment. The guarantee of access to a suitable living environment is paramount. The history of relocation in many cities for many families has been the fact that renewal action has caused a family to move from one slum area to another. Often the local agency complains that the family move has been given the statutorily required, decent safe and sanitary housing, but it is not yet required to provide the family be given access to a suitable living environment. ADA recognizes that it is difficult to give definition to suitable living environment; however, we do not believe that such a task is beyond the task of the expertise of the administrators of the renewal program. Further, we believe that a suitable living environment may be defined for legal purposes by references to what it is not. Thus we would once again purpose that the following standards be adopted as guides to determine environmental suitability. 1) Those relocated should not be relocated to the census tract where the median income is in the lowest quintile of the cities population. Low income housing too often means slums and relocatees are placed in desirable neighborhood. 2) Persons should not be relocated to areas which are planned for future condemnation. Part of the culture in

psychology of poverty is that a citizen is too often relocated to a dwelling unit that will be torn down shortly after he gets settled in it. 3) Relocation should be prohibited to areas that have been officially designated as slum or blighted areas by a local agency.

We must assert here that we do not mean to require a relocatee to give up residence in an area not considered as a suitable living environment. Where such a preference is expressed the relocatee should be offered a decent safe and sanitary residence in the neighborhood of his choice.

Banning Housing Discrimination

All housing legislation must face the problem of discrimination in housing directly; therefore the Fair Housing Provisions, Title IV of the Civil Rights Act must be included as a necessary major provision in any housing legislation.

Conclusion

Americans for Democratic Action appreciates this opportunity to express its views about needed new housing legislation.

This year by the defeat of open occupancy legislation and the curtailing of funds for domestic social programs movement toward an open and equitable society has been halted. It has been a year in which movement toward accepting a ghetto society has been ascendent.

At a time of awful crisis in our nation, Americans for Democratic Action looks to our national government to find means to establish peace and equity. The riots in our cities and the despair that is behind them bring the opportunity for greatness to this Congress.

At a time when groups form around different types of power, ADA calls for the development of Congressional Power, the power of the representatives of all the people, to put into being the programs urgently required to create political, social, and economic justice.

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