



PRESS RELEASE

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**District's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
Must Have the Tools to
Preserve Existing Affordable Housing and Provide New Housing**

In testimony on April 11, 2017 on the 2018 city budget for the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Committee of 100 on the Federal City (C100) emphasized three concerns to address the escalating affordable housing crisis: preservation of existing affordable housing, cracking down on slumlords, and improving management of the Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF).

Rising property taxes, 42,000 families waiting for public housing, and over 70 affordable housing projects faced with the loss of public subsidies are symptomatic the short supply of housing for those most in need. Affordable housing is vanishing faster than it is being replaced. The Mayor has proposed \$10 million for preservation of existing affordable housing, but this is far less than needed to ensure that the city does not continue to lose these units.

“Implementation of the Housing Preservation Strike Force recommendations and of the District Opportunity to Purchase Act (DOPA) are important steps to address this crisis,” said Stephen Hansen, Chair of C100.

Recent legal action by the Office of the Attorney General against Sanford Capital, one of the most egregious cases of a slumlord receiving large government subsidies, is an important signal that the city will enforce regulations designed to ensure maintenance of rental properties, and stop the abuse of tenants who have no other housing options. The Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) has not been working closely enough with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to catch such abuses; the additional \$2.5 million in the proposed budget would enable DCRA to hire more inspectors.

Testifying for C100, Kirby Vining, Chair of the Committee of 100 Housing Subcommittee, questioned whether DHCD has the staff, budget, and data necessary to satisfy its mandate to house those most in need. A recent report by the D.C. Auditor questioned the accountability of certain programs and requested the Council to ensure that the Department has whatever financial resources and management tools needed to assure that the Housing Production Trust Fund is meeting its affordable housing goals.

“DHCD should not be stranded with unfunded or underfunded policies and mandates. The agency may have a mandate larger than its resources and we trust that the Council will help balance this apparent gap,” said Mr. Vining.
