

FAIR HOUSING



MIRIAM MACHADO-LUCES/NNPA

"I've been here for 32 years and I organized on 14th and U Street in the '90s. If we talked then, I could have told you what was going to happen in every quadrant," he said. "Our focus is on displacement—the economics of land and housing impact health and wellness, as people are moved around this chessboard."

Moulden said that Williams' story of declining health during a prolonged housing battle, is a familiar one.

"I've seen people get sick and die in the years [after they were] forced out of their homes and that includes mental health issues," Moulden said.

In the mid-'90s, according to Census data, the district had a population of 528,000 and by 2015, the population had climbed to 681,170. Washington has seen a net population gain of more than 70,000 people since the 2010 Census and more than 100,000 residents since the 2000 Census. In the mid-1990s, the city boasted a 72 percent Black population and in 2016, according to the Census, it now stands at 48 percent. To the chagrin of the city's Black residents, "The Chocolate City," has become a vanilla swirl, replete with dog parks, street cars, bike lanes and cobbled streets as physical evidence of the changing demographics.

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A once-thriving community of more than 400 residents has been reduced to less than 100 as city officials prepare to build expensive, mixed-use housing that Barry Farm residents fear will force them out of their homes.

Washington, D.C.

cont'd from pg 7

cidence of asthma, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease."

Dominic Moulden, a veteran activist, housing advocate and resource organizer for Organizing Neighborhood Equity (ONE DC), knows Williams well and spoke of her challenges and those faced by thousands of other residents who have been displaced by rising housing costs or who have decided to fight for their homes in court and on the streets. ONE DC is a grassroots organization that advocates on behalf of residents who are in danger of losing their homes.

Moulden said that he's watched the city change in significant and seemingly all-encompassing ways, usually to the disadvantage of native Washingtonians.

OPINION: Will HUD Secretary Ben Carson Enforce the Fair Housing Act?

The Fair Housing Act was passed a week after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. President Lyndon Johnson encouraged Congress to pass the legislation as a tribute to the slain civil rights leader, who, along with several civil rights organizations (including the NAACP), strongly supported the act.

The Fair Housing Act is also known as Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (which was later amended in 1988) prevents discrimination in the sale, rental, financing, and advertising of housing because of race, color, religion, disability, family status, and national origin. But with the severe wealth inequality in our nation, there are still major gaps between homeownership by race; African American households were more heavily impacted by the Great Recession than any other racial group.

As much as a third of African American wealth was wiped out by the Great Recession, and this is partly due to discrimination in banking, including the ways that some banks aggressively pushed subprime loans on African Americans,



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even those who qualified for traditional loans.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is the federal agency that is re-

and the issue of non-discriminatory and affordable housing remains a pressing one.

But will HUD Secretary Ben Carson enforce the Fair Housing Act and effectively administer an agency that can make a difference in the quality of life for low-income people? One has to raise the question, especially as Dr. Carson seems to want to spend more time

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sponsible for enforcing the Fair Housing Act, as well as providing rental assistance, public housing, and housing vouchers for those who cannot afford housing on their incomes. Our 45th president had proposed deep cuts in the HUD budget, but the budget that was passed on March 23, 2018, just hours before the government was scheduled to shut down, actually adds money to the HUD budget, especially in the rental assistance and public housing capital funds program. Still, cuts are scheduled for the next fiscal year,

looking for a \$30,000 dining table than administering his agency. Trump's pick of Carson to administer the agency was a strange one, given that Carson's only qualification for running one of the government's largest agencies seems to be that his mom avoided public housing because of its "dangers." Trump does not seem to be high on finding qualified people to run HUD. For example, Lynne Patton, the HUD administrator for Region II, which includes New York and New Jer-

See CARSON on page 9



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