

Trump administration to evict 55,000 children of immigrants from public housing

By Eric London
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On Friday, the Trump administration announced a plan to evict over 100,000 people, including 55,000 children, from subsidized apartments and government housing projects if their household includes any undocumented immigrant.

The new rule promulgated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) overrides the previous requirement whereby a family could acquire subsidies if at least one member was a US citizen or legal permanent resident.

The total number facing eviction is 108,000—equal to the total population of Billings, Montana, or Boulder, Colorado. Roughly half those facing eviction under the new rule—some 55,000 people—are children. Seventy percent of those impacted are citizens or permanent residents.

The *Washington Post* reports that the new rule was propagated by Trump’s fascist adviser Stephen Miller. HUD itself acknowledged in a report analyzing the rule change that the purpose of the plan is explicitly to increase poverty and destitution among immigrant families.

“HUD expects that fear of the family being separated would lead to prompt evacuation by most mixed households. Temporary homelessness could arise for a household, if they are unable to find alternative housing,” the report reads.

In April, HUD Secretary and multimillionaire evangelical zealot Ben Carson first tweeted about plans to enact this measure:

“Thanks to [Trump’s] leadership, we are putting America’s most vulnerable first. Our nation faces an affordable housing challenges [sic] and hundreds of thousands are waiting to get housing assistance.”

The Trump administration has portrayed this as a “popular” measure aimed, in particular, at improving

conditions for impoverished African-Americans. The far-right *Breitbart News* wrote in April, “Nationwide, housing and rental prices for Americans and legal immigrants have spiked as Congress invited and allowed at least 45 million legal and illegal immigrants into the United States since the 1970s. The resulting competition for housing has negated post-1970s wage gains, pressured many African-Americans and whites out of California and New York towards the South.”

Such claims are brazen lies aimed at covering the fact that Trump and his billionaire backers on Wall Street are pillaging social programs, slashing taxes for the super-rich and carrying out a massive transfer of wealth from the working class—regardless of immigration status. Immigrants are not to blame for rising housing costs and the displacement of workers through gentrification!

Responsibility for this falls in the lap of multimillionaire hedge fund managers like *Breitbart*’s bankrollers, Rebekah and Robert Mercer.

HUD acknowledges that the plan will not save money and will instead lead to further cuts and poorer quality housing for “citizens.” HUD would be compelled to “reduce the quantity and quality of assisted housing in response to higher costs,” and “there could be fewer households served under the housing choice vouchers program” because of the rule change.

Furthermore, in March the Trump administration proposed slashing the HUD budget by \$9.6 billion, or 18 percent of its total budget. The budget would massively increase rents for subsidized renters, including by tripling rent for deeply impoverished elderly and disabled families. The proposal also establishes work requirements for subsidy eligibility, cuts the operating budget for public housing by 38 percent, cuts funding for the homeless assistance

program by \$34 million, and cuts funding for Native American housing block grants by \$55 million, or 8 percent.

The Trump administration is deepening cuts to HUD carried out by the Obama administration. From 2009 to 2012, for example, Obama cut \$461 million from subsidies for seniors, \$625 million for maintenance, \$760 from public housing operating funds, and \$5 million from subsidies for people with HIV/AIDS. Millions of people were foreclosed upon during Obama's first term in office.

National Low Income Housing Coalition President Diane Yentel said of Trump's recent budget proposals:

“With this budget request, President Trump and Secretary Carson are making clear in no uncertain terms their willingness to increase evictions and homelessness—for the vulnerable seniors, people with disabilities and families with kids who will be unable to manage having to spend more of their very limited incomes to cover rent hikes.

“The administration callously disregards its responsibility to the millions of households living in deteriorating public housing and to low-income people and communities working to recover and rebuild after disasters by eliminating critical resources for public housing, rental housing construction and community development. This is a cruel and unconscionable budget proposal, and it should be soundly rejected by Congress.”

The rule change is part of Trump's efforts to create conditions for the growth of a far-right movement in the US. The president's efforts to bar immigrants from accessing any social programs will force hundreds of thousands of immigrant families into abject poverty. As a result, living conditions in working class immigrant neighborhoods in major cities will become wrought with homelessness, disease and crime. These policies are aimed at transforming these neighborhoods into segregated ghettos, facilitating Trump's efforts to portray immigrants as the enemy.

Non-immigrant workers and youth must reject these efforts to divide the working class along national and racial lines. Trump and his aristocratic supporters are using immigrants as a scapegoat while Wall Street robs blind workers of all races and backgrounds.

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