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August 24, 2015

The Honorable Julian Castro
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th St SW
Washington, DC 20410-0001

Dear Secretary Castro:

I write today to inform you of my recent Golden Fleece Award to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for wasting \$104.4 million to support thousands of over-income families in public housing units throughout the United States while eligible, low-income families sit on public housing waiting lists.

A recent report from the HUD Office of Inspector General (OIG) focused on the prevalence of over-income families living in public housing facilities, costing American taxpayers approximately \$104.4 million over the next year. In one case that was investigated, a four-person household in New York City receiving an annual salary of nearly \$500,000—over seven times the amount of the low-income threshold—lives in taxpayer-subsidized public housing, while over 300,000 families sit on the waiting list. Worse yet, the New York City Housing Authority knew about the increased income of the inhabitants and sought to justify their decision of allowing them to remain in the unit.

There is no justification for this poor decision making. Public housing programs are meant to serve as a safety net for the most vulnerable in our society, helping parents care for their children while they work to get back on their feet and off government assistance. To pass over these low-income, eligible participants for those who have made it out of poverty and into successful jobs mocks the intended purpose of our public housing programs.

While Congress still must work to enact necessary reforms to ensure the further protection and proper utilization of federal tax dollars, HUD must be accountable and responsible for implementing common-sense policies to help those in need. I am committed to eradicating this type of inefficient and ineffective policy and regulation by our federal agencies, and today's Golden Fleece highlights the current waste of federal dollars at the expense of hardworking taxpayers and needs of our low-income families.

The OIG report calls for HUD to establish policies to reduce the number of over-income families in public housing and alleviate the housing needs of low-income families. I urge your immediate adherence to this recommendation, and please keep me apprised of your efforts at improvement.

Sincerely,

French Hill
Member of Congress