

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Mayor Finally Gets His Letter!

GALVESTON, Texas – 14 July 2011

After **three attempts** to get HUD Assistant Secretary Mercedes Marquez to provide political cover for his Public Housing rebuilding scheme, Mayor Joe Jaworski was finally successful in getting her to write a [letter](#) telling him that he has to do what he already wants to do!

For those who have not seen his previous attempts, they were uncovered using ORRs submitted by the Galveston Open Government Project (GOGP). The first was on [31 August 2010](#) with a follow up on [26 October 2010](#) that began with the heading **“need for URGENT help”**. The third, and most recent request, was surely not committed to written form where we might later discover it, but one can only imagine how **desperate things must have become at Public Housing Headquarters** to motivate the Mayor for a third try!

Communications to our email distribution list, in recent days, warned our subscribers to **expect desperate efforts** by the Public Housing Czar and his supporters as the reality that a plaintiffs group, who will have their civil rights violated by his plan, will be **challenging it in court**. We also warned that threats that the City will “lose all its funding” will be part of the scare tactics.

The Mayor got what he wanted, but what does he really have?

He has a letter that is nothing more than a warmed over rehash of Kevin Hamby’s fanciful “opinion letter” that made an attempt to “discover” whether the Conciliation Agreement actually said that 569 Public Housing units must be built “in the City of Galveston”. There is

little doubt that those who drafted the Conciliation Agreement wanted it to say that, but they did such a poor job; it doesn't actually say it.

However, IT DOES NOT MATTER what the Conciliation Agreement says or does not say, or what the Lone Star Agreement says or does not say; **if the terms of either Agreement violate the Fair Housing Act; THEY ARE UNLAWFUL!**

The Mayor was successful in getting Secretary Marquez **to include various threats** in her letter such as, *“Failure to cooperate with the State in carrying out its obligations put the Conciliation Agreement in jeopardy”*. Since we know that the Conciliation Agreement does not actually say that GHA must build 569 PH units in the City of Galveston; this general comment could mean many things, or almost nothing!

The letter also says, *“Further, City actions which impede the Housing Authority from rebuilding public housing may put the City’s regular CDBG funding at risk next year and in future years.”* What Secretary Marquez would have known if she had read [Conciliation Agreement](#) is that on page 6 it says, *“The acceptance by HUD of the Complaints does in no way confer upon HUD any additional rights or obligations beyond those specified in Public Law 110-329 and the August 14, 2009 issue of the Federal Register. The regular (non-disaster, annual) allocation of CDBG funds to the State of Texas is in no way delayed or otherwise affected by the execution of this Conciliation Agreement.”*

The GOP is looking forward to the day when Assistant Secretary Marquez must explain to a court why she is supporting a plan that forces all of the Public Housing in Galveston County to be built in the City of Galveston: in a floodplain, in violation of E.O. 11988; most likely in violation of CFR 941.202 Site & Neighborhood Standards; and that **REFUSES TO USE A REGIONAL APPROACH**, so that it concentrates low-income minorities in some of the worst census tracts in the County in violation of the Fair Housing Act.

Does she know that the GHA Board has assured residents on the West End that no Public Housing will be built in their high-opportunity census tracts, and that the Board intends to build most of its units in some of the worst census tracts in the City?

How would you explain that to a court?

We are hoping that she will also be explaining it to the House Oversight Committee this summer!

Finally, the GOP would like to thank the Mayor for getting Secretary Marquez's **support of this unlawful plan IN WRITING!**

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