

Shaun Donovan is the **Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**. He is the federal official who told the Mayor and the GHA that portable Housing Choice Vouchers are an unacceptable solution to this city's Public Housing needs. He also told them they must rebuild on the Cedar Terrace and Magnolia footprints, trapping Public Housing residents in high-poverty census tracts. Finally, he will not allow them to submit a regional plan like those the courts have ordered in *Thompson v HUD* and *Walker v HUD*. In fact, in *Thompson v HUD*, **the court ordered HUD to use portable Housing Choice Vouchers** throughout the Baltimore region.

Shaun Donovan has told the City of Galveston what it can and cannot do, but **compare what he told this city to what the courts have ordered AND what he said to the Urban Institute** in a recent speech.

Here are some of the highlights:

*"... we know the segregated, **neighborhoods of concentrated poverty** across the country resulted not in spite of government policy, but **in many cases because of it.***

*Perhaps nowhere was this clearer than public housing. While public housing provided a critical resource to families for the better part of the last century, it's come at a price for the residents -- nearly a third of whom live in the **country's poorest neighborhoods, with few jobs, the poorest performing schools, and little hope for the next generation.***

***These projects were sited in the most marginal, disconnected locations. Making matters worse, as policies developed over time, they had the effect of locking in a concentration of poverty that has persisted for generations -- constraining mobility in the most profound of ways."***

***“... a belief that when you don’t have mobility, you don’t have access to opportunity. That’s because when you choose a home, you choose so much more than a home. You also choose access to jobs, to schools for your children, to public safety. You choose a community -- and the choices available in that community. That’s why Housing Choice Vouchers represented an enormously important step forward -- not simply for housing mobility but for opportunity.”***

***“You all know that providing voucher holders real choices depends on an adequate supply of rental housing that they can afford with that voucher.”***

***“Pathways to Opportunity:***

***I’m proud to work for an administration that has affirmed the important role that the Housing Choice Voucher program plays promoting housing mobility.***

***Indeed, every year since President Obama has been in office, we have made the voucher program our top budget priority.”***

***“... we are making important improvements that make it easier for families to take their Housing Choice Voucher to a community that offers greater opportunities.”***

***“... we’re making sure that residents can afford to live in neighborhoods of opportunity with jobs, transportation, and good schools. And we’re committed to mobility efforts like Thompson as well. While our work there is not yet done, I believe it represents not only justice for families who were wronged -- but also a testing ground for mobility policies and lessons that can be applied more broadly in communities across the country.”***

***“... successful communities require more than successful housing -- they also need good schools, affordable transportation and good jobs.”***

***“This audience knows that in too many places, the **Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing** has been a paper exercise.”***

***“Just as importantly, we have to recognize that some communities can do everything right on the fair housing front -- and **still fail to provide true opportunity if surrounding communities shirk their responsibilities.**”***

***“... our ability to move in America is inextricably linked to our ability to succeed as Americans.”***

***“We believe **it’s wrong for anyone not to have mobility** -- wrong for them, but also wrong for our economy.”***

***“That tells is that **if mobility isn’t equally shared across the economic spectrum and races and backgrounds, then we as a country lose.**”***

We agree with almost everything Secretary Donovan said; we just can’t understand why he thinks that none of it applies to Galveston!

[http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/press/speeches\\_remarks\\_statements/2012/Speech\\_06122012](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/press/speeches_remarks_statements/2012/Speech_06122012)

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