

TED POE
2ND DISTRICT, TEXAS

COMMITTEES:
FOREIGN AFFAIRS
JUDICIARY

FOUNDER OF CONGRESSIONAL
VICTIM'S RIGHTS CAUCUS



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-4302

February 15, 2012

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The Honorable Darrell Issa
Chairman
Oversight and Government Reform Committee
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Issa:

I am writing regarding issues raised by concerned citizens in Galveston, Texas, an area devastated by Hurricane Ike. Local residents have shared the following concerns about the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development:

- It is alleged that HUD has attempted to circumvent the City of Galveston's right to provide oversight of its own Housing Authority. A conflict of interest between HUD Assistant Secretary Mercedes Marquez and McCormack Baron Salazar has been raised, as Ms. Marquez was previously employed by McCormack Baron Salazar;
- It is alleged that HUD has ignored Executive Order 11988 and 24CFR55.20, which mitigates the federal government's risk by limiting its investments in disaster-prone areas;
- It is alleged that HUD has ignored its own Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy, and has insisted that Galveston City Council Members build additional public housing units, despite 2009 surveys that indicate a lack of demand, a declining population, and current high rental vacancies. The proposed additional housing built by HUD will cost taxpayers \$212K per unit, when the current market rate is \$60K per unit;
- It is alleged that HUD has used non-eligible household population to distort U.S. Census data to justify its needs. Non-eligible households include off-campus college students and non-legal residents;
- It is alleged that HUD has not provided a Fair Housing Rule that defines what Fair Housing is. Without a national fair housing policy different rules are followed throughout the country;
- It is alleged that HUD is requiring the City of Galveston follow directives that have not been provided in writing;
- It is alleged that HUD has attempted to exclude the Council of Governments from providing oversight and from conducting investigations that are within its jurisdiction;

- It is alleged that HUD has threatened to withhold federal infrastructure funding for Galveston and the State of Texas until public housing damaged by Hurricane Ike is rebuilt. It is also alleged that Hurricane Ike funds already received would have to be repayed;
- It is alleged that HUD has been unresponsive and/or extremely slow in responding to requests for information, and has used privileged communications to keep City Council Members, the Council of Governments, and the citizens of Galveston out of the loop on issues that affect their local Housing Authority;

I would greatly appreciate an investigation of the above allegations, and a response from your committee. Your time and attention is greatly appreciated.

God and Texas,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ted Poe', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

TED POE
Member of Congress
TEXAS

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The Honorable Elijah Cummings
Ranking Member
Oversight and Government Reform Committee
2471 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Cummings:

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