

May 18, 2021

The Honorable Marcia Fudge
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20410

Dear Secretary Fudge:

I write to direct your attention to the absence of inspections at a number of Florida properties that participate in Project-Based Section 8 Rental Assistance through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

As I wrote to you on April 29, 2021 and May 4, 2021, my staff has received direct outreach from constituents who are tenants at Eastside Terrace Apartments, Eastside Gardens Apartments, and Hilltop Village Apartments in Jacksonville, Florida. When my staff visited these properties, they found evidence of chronic administrative neglect, including severe rodent and pest infestations, black mold, crumbling structural integrity, and general disrepair.

I also learned that these properties had not undergone mandatory Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) inspections since November 19, 2019, November 13, 2018, and December 2, 2015, respectively. While I understand that some inspections have been delayed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, these properties should have been inspected prior to March 2020.

I remain concerned that the lack of timely and regular inspections has allowed conditions to decline at other properties in Florida, and perhaps throughout the country. I have since learned that there are currently 29 properties in Florida with failing REAC scores under the Project-Based Section 8 Rental Assistance program that have not been inspected in several years. In particular, Parkview Manor in Quincy, Florida has not been inspected since August 24, 2017, despite a failing score of 56 out of 100. Campus Towers in Jacksonville has not been inspected since March 1, 2018 with a failing score of 54 out of 100. Further, Ocala Place in Ocala received a score of 21 out of 100 and was most recently inspected on September 11, 2019. Over the last two years, HUD has provided more than \$60.6 million in federal financial assistance to these 29 properties throughout Florida. This past week, my staff visited most of these properties across the state and saw conditions that are unsafe and unsanitary.

This lack of inspection would apparently violate HUD's Uniform Physical Condition Standards, which clearly states that properties with failing inspections must receive annual

inspections, and that properties with standard scores must receive inspections every two years to ensure properties meet acceptable housing conditions.

Tenants should not have to wait almost six years between safety and sanitation inspections to ensure they have appropriate living conditions. I urge that immediate action be taken to ensure that tenants are afforded the living conditions they are guaranteed by law, including new REAC inspections as soon as possible. Additionally, I request that you provide my office with the following by Tuesday, June 1, 2020:

1. A timeline describing the dates by which each property will receive a REAC inspection, as well as the inspection results when available; and
2. A detailed explanation for why Uniform Physical Condition Standards have not been applied to the properties in the State of Florida that have failing REAC scores.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to working with you to protect the people and families of Florida.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Rubio', written in a cursive style.

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator