

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BEN CARSON, TRUMP'S SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

After a short-lived presidential campaign, Carson, a prominent neurosurgeon, joined the Trump administration.

CARSON IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING:

HUD awarded **at least five political operatives with no housing policy experience** raises and promotions within the first few months of starting their HUD positions.¹ Each of the five appointees had either worked on Carson's or Trump's presidential campaign and were among at least 24 individuals who lacked housing policy experience but were nonetheless appointed.

Carson has also hired family members and friends into high-ranking positions despite these appointees being unqualified or violating agency ethical standards. Carson's deputy chief of staff is the son of one of his close friends and a former business associate, Al Costa.² Carson's own son, the co-founder of a private equity firm, was put in charge of a "listening tour" in Baltimore where Carson spoke about new HUD policies to high-profile guests.³ Carson Jr. lobbied to include neighborhoods in the tour that he was scouting for investment purposes. The HUD Inspector General ended up opening an investigation into the extent to which policies are informed by the Carson family's business interests. Another investigation showed Carson and his wife attempted to purchase a \$31,000 dining room set for his office. When asked about it, he said he had no knowledge of it, but emails obtained by FOIA referred to it as the furniture that "the Secretary and Mrs. Carson picked out."⁴

Last year a **manufactured housing industry trade group requested that an agency official who had been opposed to their desired regulatory reforms be removed**, a request that senior officials in the Department obliged.⁵ With that resistant official out of the way, HUD kicked off the process to reconsider regulations.

Carson has also taken steps to scale back civil rights enforcement. Municipalities no longer have to submit plans to desegregate their communities to receive HUD funds.⁶ Another new HUD rule would allow federally funded shelters to deny transgender people admission on the grounds of religious beliefs or force transgender women to share bathrooms and sleeping chambers with men.⁷ **And in yet another recent rule, HUD plans to evict undocumented immigrants from public housing.** HUD estimated **more than 55,000 children** who are legal U.S. residents or citizens could be displaced.⁸

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