



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on June 6, 2016

Battle Rages as GOP Saves Obama Plot to Diversify Neighborhoods

After some grandstanding to placate outraged constituents, establishment Republicans in Congress quietly voted to fund Obama's unconstitutional plan to [fundamentally transform your neighborhood by bringing in more federally funded "diversity."](#) In short, if Big Brother's race-obsessed data-gathering machine determines that there are not enough poor or minority residents on welfare living in your city, town, zip code, or neighborhood, Obama [wants to change that using your tax dollars.](#) The scheme also sidelines states and borders by considering "regions" instead, a key element of the agenda to [break down the traditional United States and its federalist system of government.](#)



But the battle is far from over. And Americans still have many tools at their disposal to block the scheming. For instance, the "Affirmatively Further Fair Housing" plot is contingent on successfully bribing local officials into compliance. As more than a few analysts have observed, that means cities and communities can easily reject the plan. Simply stated, all they have to do is refuse to accept unconstitutional bribes from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). If the bribes (disguised as "grants" and so on) from a bankrupt Uncle Sam are refused, the strings they come attached with are null and void, leaving Washington, D.C., bureaucrats with no leverage. Some cities are already leading the way.

Separately, state governments can and should stand up to the agenda as well. Among other tactics, lawmakers can use the power of nullification to prohibit cities and towns from becoming federal agents in Obama's quest to re-shape America via anti-constitutional housing policy. Nullification has been used by American states since the 1700s to resist unconstitutional or immoral activities, including the "Fugitive Slave Act" purporting to require the return of runaway slaves. The powerful tool promoted by America's Founders remains relevant and in use today — including by liberals in states such as Colorado, which voted to nullify federal and international prohibitions against marijuana.

Leading the charge to quash the Obama administration's lawless AFFH program at the federal level was U.S. Senator Mike Lee (R-Utah), one of the leading advocates of liberty and constitutional government in Congress. Last month, [Senator Lee proposed an amendment](#) to the Senate Transportation and HUD appropriations bill that would have defunded Obama's AFFH edicts and their implementation by the federal Leviathan. It was a simple vote that would have definitively shut down the scheme to relocate government-funded housing projects to middle-class suburbs. And in a passionate speech on the Senate floor, Lee explained why it was so urgently needed.



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“Proponents of AFFH, including President Obama, claim that it fulfills the original purpose and promise of the Fair Housing Act of 1968. But the truth is, HUD’s new housing rule isn’t the fulfillment — but a betrayal — of the Fair Housing Act of 1968,” Lee told his colleagues. “The original intent of the Fair Housing Act was to protect the God-given right of individuals and families — no matter their skin color or ethnicity — to buy and rent homes where they please. By contrast, the explicit purpose of HUD’s new rule is to empower federal bureaucrats to dictate where a community’s low-income residents will live. This is not what ‘progress’ looks like, Mr. President.”

Lee also outlined how the Obama HUD edict would purport to empower D.C. bureaucrats to run roughshod over local communities and their elected officials. “If any aspect of a community’s housing and demographic patterns fails to meet HUD bureaucrats’ expansive definition of ‘fair housing,’ the local government must submit a plan to reorganize the community’s housing practices according to the preferences and priorities of the bureaucrats,” he explained. “Critics of AFFH often say — as I have said — that this rule turns HUD into a National Zoning Board with the power to unilaterally rewrite local zoning laws and land-use regulations in every city and town in America.... Under the new rule, HUD doesn’t replace local Public Housing Authorities — it conscripts them into its service.”

“To make matters worse, this new rule will end America’s unique — and uniquely successful — commitment to localism and diversity,” Lee continued, adding that neighborhood-level construction decisions would now be subject to the “whims” of future presidents. “If this past year has not yet done enough to give you pause about handing over such power to the Executive Branch, you’re not paying close enough attention.” He also expressed hope that lawmakers in the House — where GOP leadership has already caved to Obama on this issue (and practically every other) on multiple occasions — would pass a similar measure again in the near future.

Instead of voting to protect their constituents and defend the Constitution, which they all swore an oath to uphold, establishment Republicans joined with Senate Democrats to quash Lee’s amendment. In its place, lawmakers did overwhelmingly support a weaker amendment — described as “toothless” by critics — that was offered by Senator Susan Collins of Maine, a liberal establishment Republican. Under the Collins amendment, HUD may not directly force local authorities “to undertake specific changes to existing zoning laws.” But as Lee explained, the Collins measure would allow the “underhanded and subversive” mechanics of the AFFH to continue.

In fact, the amendment was beyond toothless, because it tackled the non-existent problem of Obama’s HUD being able to force local governments to take particular actions or adopt particular policies. In reality, neither HUD or HUD Secretary Julian Castro have, or have ever had, the authority to compel local governments to do anything. Instead, the AFFH scheme relies on federally funded bribes and the threat of lawsuits to impose HUD’s schemes on local communities — something the Lee amendment would have tackled head on, but which the Collins amendment ignores and enables.

The Collins amendment passed by huge margins, with 87 in favor versus just nine against, showing that a national zoning board is incredibly bad politics, even for extremist Democrats. The Lee amendment, by contrast, which would have actually stopped Obama’s HUD from re-engineering American communities for sinister “progressive” purposes, was defeated by establishment Republicans and Democrats. More than a few analysts and commentators concluded that the Collins amendment was in fact a cheap and transparent ploy aimed at providing political cover for pro-Obama Republicans to bankroll Obama’s AFFH scheme with federal tax dollars. And there can be little doubt about it.

Critics were outraged. “Americans wonder what is going wrong with the system in Washington, D.C.



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where Senators seem more interested in playing paddy cake with President Obama and his radical agenda rather than standing up and fighting it," said a statement by Americans for Limited Government President Rick Manning, who supported Lee's measure to de-fund Obama's schemes bribing local governments for "racial and income gerrymandering zoning requirements." "Unfortunately, too many of [Lee's] Republican colleagues were more afraid of the race hustlers who seek to put low income high rise apartments into middle-class neighborhoods."

Others vowed to keep fighting despite the failure of Lee's amendment. Property-rights attorney Ethan Blevins with the College of Public Interest Law at the Pacific Legal Fund, for example, vowed to use legal action. "Perhaps Senator Lee's amendment will get another chance once people begin to feel the impact of the AFFH rule," he said, citing government-engineered changes in home prices, neighborhoods being re-shaped, communities getting sick of "mummification by red tape," and people realizing that "the strings attached to federal money end in a noose." However, in "the meantime," Blevins said, the Pacific Legal Fund "won't hesitate to resort to the courts to do what the Senate cannot."

The New American first [reported on Obama's plan in 2013](#), long before it became a major political flash point in the administration's war on America. Among other schemes, the HUD decree makes billions of dollars worth of funding to local governments contingent on the communities accepting federal control of their policies. That means neighborhoods must be re-zoned along income and racial specifications developed by the federal executive branch, rather than the wishes of local communities. It is basically extreme social-engineering on a national scale to further Obama's "fundamental transformation" of America.

The plan also deliberately ignores state lines in favor of "regions." The people of Dubuque, Iowa, found this out the hard way when the Obama administration coerced local officials into recruiting welfare recipients from Chicago to live in its tax-subsidized low-income housing. The outrageous policy — and its disastrous effects, not to mention the assault on traditions of local self-government and state boundaries — was outlined in a [report by the Public Interest Institute](#) last year. And [that is just the beginning of what Obama and his allies have planned](#).

Aside from the fact that the U.S. Constitution delegates no authority over housing policy to the federal government, making the entire HUD bureaucracy unconstitutional, the evidence also suggests that the HUD "Community Development Block Grant" bribes used to advance AFFH are a massive failure. Indeed, according to a [study by the Reason Foundation](#), the flow of taxpayer dollars has primarily benefited cronies and special interests, while doing basically nothing to reduce poverty. So taxpayers are being unconstitutionally bilked out of almost \$15 billion a year to shower on crony capitalists. Now Obama wants to use the handouts to help re-shape America too — and, presumably, to transform the demographics of America's state legislative and congressional districts.

In fact, even the federal government's own studies show that the radical "housing diversity" machinations being pushed from D.C. have failed miserably to accomplish the feds' own stated objectives. "A 2011 study sponsored by HUD found that adults using more generous Section 8 vouchers did not get better jobs or get off welfare," [reported](#) Paul Sperry in the *New York Post*. "In fact, more went on food stamps. And their children did not do better in their new schools. Worse, crime simply followed them to their safer neighborhoods, ruining the quality of life for existing residents."

It is time for the American people's elected representatives to put a stop to Obama's AFFH scheme, as well as the broader "fundamental transformation" of America that he has helped oversee. The agenda is



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unwise, unconstitutional, unaffordable, and dangerous to American traditions and liberty. It must be stopped and reversed.

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