

NAACP, NAHB Release Groundbreaking Report On Housing

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National Association For Home Builders

August 30, 2006 - A joint housing policy report on ways to expand housing opportunity for minority households was released today by the [NAACP](#) and the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB).

The report, "[Building on a Dream](#)," assesses the state of minority housing and examines barriers to housing choice and affordability. It concludes with a series of joint policy recommendations designed to improve minority housing opportunity.

"Owning a home is the foundation of prosperity and conveys to families many social and economic benefits," said NAACP President & CEO Bruce S. Gordon. "Yet for minority families, African American families in particular, great variances remain in homeownership rates and affordable housing opportunities. It is time to bridge that gap. The NAACP and NAHB have chosen to make a difference, one family at a time, one community at a time."

The report notes that despite recent gains in minority homeownership rates, the homeownership rate for African Americans is 20 percent below the national average. Half of all African Americans live in unaffordable, inadequate or crowded housing. A shortage of workforce housing in many metropolitan areas creates especially severe problems for minorities, even those employed in key community support occupations, such as police officers, teachers, firefighters and healthcare workers.

"For far too long, the dream of homeownership has eluded too many of America's minority families. It's time to take action," said David Pressly, NAHB president and a home builder from Statesville, N.C. "Working together, the NAACP and NAHB have identified opportunities for change and steps we can take to open doors for all Americans."

The report can be found at www.nahb.org/buildingonadream.

The report assesses some of the barriers to housing choice and affordability for minority families. The barriers include:

- A lack of homebuyer education for minorities;
- Excessive development regulations that drive up the cost of housing;
- Predatory lending practices that increase the cost of mortgages and the risk of default;
- Restrictions on multifamily housing that diminish the supply of moderately priced for-sale and rental housing.
- Fair Housing Act violations that diminish minority families' access to quality housing in many neighborhoods;

In the effort to address the barriers and to improve minority housing opportunity, the NAACP and NAHB have developed a set of nine policy recommendations and related action steps. The two organizations encourage public and private institutions to establish policies that will increase the supply of affordable housing and address the particular issues that make it harder for minorities to find a decent and affordable home. The NAACP and NAHB jointly recommend policies that will:

- Provide comprehensive home-buyer education developed and promoted by public and private housing market participants.
- Eliminate predatory lending practices by better defining such practices and encouraging federal banking regulators to develop and enforce stringent anti-predatory lending regulations.
- Prevent racial discrimination through increased federal, state and local enforcement of the nation's Fair Housing laws and education about those laws. Participants in the housing market must be aware of their responsibilities under the Fair Housing Act.
- Ensure that state and local regulatory activities do not—regardless of intent—violate the Fair Housing Act by disproportionately pricing minorities out of the housing market.
- Encourage local planning and zoning boards to accommodate a range of housing types that meet the needs of families across the economic spectrum and to acknowledge the importance of housing opportunity in their decision-making.
- Encourage government legislators, regulators and administrators to remove and avoid lengthy and costly approval processes and excessive development standards that unnecessarily drive up the cost of housing.
- Increase funding for federal housing programs, such as HOME, Section 8 rental assistance vouchers and Community Development Block Grants, in order to keep pace with the growing gap between incomes and rising housing costs.
- Maintain all existing housing preferences in the federal tax code, including the mortgage interest deduction, the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, and deductions for residential property taxes.
- Promote the production of new affordable housing by educating public and private stakeholders that affordable housing is a necessary and desirable part of their communities.

In addition to the report, the NAACP and NAHB are engaged in joint litigation in Texas to stop one city from imposing exclusionary development regulations that would push the cost of housing beyond the means of many families, in violation of the Fair Housing Act.