

**STATEMENT OF SANDRA HENRIQUEZ
NOMINEE, HUD ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC AND INDIAN HOUSING
COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS
MAY 13, 2009**

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Senator Shelby and distinguished members of the Committee, for considering my nomination and the opportunity to appear before you this morning. I am truly honored and humbled to have had Secretary Donovan recommend that President Obama nominate me as Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing.

Thank you, Congressman Frank for introducing me today. With me are my father, Howard Brooks, my brother, Bruce Brooks, my son, Carlos and colleague, DaVonne Bolton. My son and daughter remain in Boston, but I am certain they are watching this proceeding.

The most significant portion of my career has been in real estate property management of affordable housing, both the private and public sectors of the industry. I quickly turned to residential real estate because I was more interested in the people who lived there than the commercial side. I believe that housing is a right and that the provision of safe, decent, well-cared for units for low and very low income families and individuals lays the foundation to change lives. If a family's shelter is secure, then that household can begin to work on other aspects of their lives that many of us take for granted, such as child care, getting a job, finding a better one, education for themselves and their children.

For the past thirteen years, I have been the Administrator and Chief Executive Officer of the Boston Housing Authority. As the largest single landlord in the City of Boston, and one of the largest public authorities in the nation, the BHA provides 11,500 public housing units and 13,000 rental assistance subsidies, together housing 10% of the city's population. With an eight hundred fifty person workforce, and program budgets exceeding \$280 million annually, I have led an outstanding team to reform the housing authority from near troubled status to that of high performer in its public housing and Section 8 portfolio. Following real estate industry policies and practices, the BHA moved to asset management models before Congress and HUD required it. We embraced the basics and the vacancy rate dropped from 15% to 2-3% across the portfolio, non-emergency work order completion times dropped from 120

days to 15, and they continue to fall, and rent collections are up.

At the same time, we moved from being labeled by HUD as “systemically discriminatory” to “a national fair housing model”, partnered with sister city agencies, local community development corporations and other non-profit housing providers to increase the production of affordable rental housing, created housing strategies and programs to house the homeless, and introduced “green principles” into our business practices and into our building maintenance and construction.

The Boston Housing Authority has used the HOPE VI program to redevelop three properties, with a fourth just beginning. In addition, we created 62 new first-time homebuyers, none

of whom are in default or foreclosure. We have used mixed financing to redevelop two other properties, and when all redevelopment is taken together, they total almost \$1 billion over all. For every federal or state dollar, we leveraged eight.

We have used Energy Performance Contracting to retrofit many of our outdated heating plants, making them state-of-the-art, more efficient, less costly to operate and creating better living environments for residents.

In addition, we have used available HUD programs to use a portion of our ongoing capital allocation to leverage bond financing to expand ongoing improvements to the physical plant. Coupled with recent ARRA funding, this totals more than \$110 million.

My housing experience has taught me that regardless of the price point, maintaining and improving properties is essential to those who live there. Preservation and improvement of the 1.2 million units of public housing stock, the creation of more affordable rental housing, as well as the continued ability to support families and individuals through rental assistance, is essential to realizing the dream of millions of our citizens.

Secretary Shaun Donovan's commitment to accountability and transparency and his leadership of HUD provides us with the opportunity to do our best work on behalf of those who benefit from HUD's programs. If I am confirmed, I will be focused on and committed to learning more about Native American housing, as well as public housing. I am

grateful that President Obama has nominated me and I want to thank each of you for your consideration of my nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to serving the nation, especially those who live and work in public and Native American housing.

Thank you.