

Testimony of Solomon Greene
Nominee to be Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research of the
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Before the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
August 5, 2021

Chairman Brown, Ranking Member Toomey, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today as you consider my nomination.

I want to begin by thanking President Biden and Secretary Fudge for the confidence and trust they placed in me by nominating me for this important position. I would also like to thank my family for their love and unwavering support.

I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to several mentors who have been instrumental in my life, including the Honorable Dorothy Nelson, Ingrid Gould Ellen, Katherine O'Regan, Erika Poethig, and Sarah Rosen Wartell.

Senators, HUD is currently navigating a rapidly evolving housing crisis, and it is playing a central role in helping the nation build back better from the pandemic. We are at a moment in our nation's history when HUD's mission is more important than ever.

Throughout my career I have sought to apply the best available research, data and evidence to advance HUD's mission. My work on housing and urban development policy has been motivated by three deeply held commitments, which I believe would make me well-suited to serve if confirmed.

First, I have dedicated my career to helping all families find and keep stable and affordable housing. This is something I grew to appreciate from an early age.

I was raised primarily by a single mother who earned so little while working full-time as a nurse that we received Medicaid and food stamps. By economic necessity, my family often moved to where we could afford the rent until my mother was able to scrimp and save just enough for a downpayment on a house in a rural county in New York.

That house and property, where my mother still lives with my brother, his wife and my baby nephew, provided the stability I needed to be able to focus on school and my future. I truly believe it is why I am able to sit here before you today as a nominee.

These early experiences also instilled in me the recognition that a home is more than a roof over your head – it is also a platform for health and wellbeing and a downpayment on your children's future. Throughout my career, I have strived to give every family the opportunities I was given by studying policies and programs that expand options for safe, stable and affordable housing.

Second, I believe that evidence-based housing and community development policies can help ensure that every child has a fair shot in life. The American Dream is the idea that, no matter who you are or where you come from, if you work hard and give it your all, you will succeed. I have dedicated my career to ensuring that where you come from does not determine who you can become later in life.

I study the policies that shape communities and the opportunities they offer their residents. For years, I have worked with federal, state and local leaders to design and test policies that revitalize communities, expand neighborhood choices, and boost upward mobility.

Finally, and most importantly for the position to which I have been nominated, I am passionate about using the best available data and evidence to inform public policy decisions at all levels of government.

I am first and foremost a researcher with a strong and proven commitment to evidence-based policymaking. I have demonstrated this through over two decades of work on data-driven and community-informed housing policy: from my work in local government to my work at HUD, as a graduate student in law and urban planning, a legal research fellow and adjunct professor at NYU, and mostly recently for almost seven years as a senior researcher at the Urban Institute.

In all of my work, I have applied independent, unbiased, and objective research to help ensure that our public policies are rooted in evidence, maximize the impact of limited resources, and respond to the realities of people and communities on the ground.

I am also passionate about bringing together researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to identify evidence-based and data-driven policy solutions to our nation's housing and community development challenges. I firmly believe that rigorous research can provide diverse stakeholders a common frame through which to assess problems and a shared foundation to find solutions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I look forward to your questions.

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