

**Testimony of Seth Daniel Appleton**  
**Assistant Secretary-Designate for Policy Development and Research**  
**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development**

**Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs**  
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Chairman Crapo, Ranking Member Brown, distinguished members of this committee, thank you for convening this hearing. It is an honor to appear before you as the nominee to be Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development for Policy Development and Research. As a former staffer in the House of Representatives, I have sat along the wall behind the dais, but never at the witness table. To be sure, it is a humbling experience, as I have a great deal of respect for this institution and the important role it plays in confirming nominees for service in the executive branch.

Before I begin my testimony, I would like to recognize my family. My wife, Brooke, is here today. In typical Capitol Hill fashion, we met first as colleagues in the House. My mother, Susan, and my father, Bob, are both here today from St. Louis. My mom has been a law professor for the last 43 years and taught me the value of research from a very young age. My brother, Jesse, and his wife, Ali, are here from St. Louis, too. Along with them is my nephew Bennett, who will soon be celebrating his first birthday. Hopefully, he will enjoy his first congressional hearing. On Brooke's side of the family are my in-laws, Barb and Tim Shupe from Stanberry, Missouri. Last, but certainly not least, is my grandmother Winifred Frelich, who, hopefully, is watching the broadcast at home in St. Louis. She just celebrated her 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday on Friday and reminded me that she was the one who brought me to Washington, and indeed the Senate, for the very first time during a spring break nearly 30 years ago. In addition to my family, I would also like to thank Senators Blunt and McCaskill, as well as the entire Missouri congressional delegation, Republicans and Democrats alike, for supporting my nomination.

HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) plays a critical role for the entire Department, coordinating recommendations on policy matters, overseeing research projects and demonstrations, disseminating economic information, and managing international programs and philanthropic initiatives. It is on the cutting edge of identifying new trends and finding innovative solutions to the housing and community development challenges of the day. As such, the Assistant Secretary must be familiar with the public policy development process, understand the importance of sound research in formulating evidence-based solutions, and provide effective leadership, management, and budget oversight to the PD&R team. If confirmed, I am committed to serving as a partner to this Committee and the Congress, which has long been involved in shaping PD&R's research and policy work.

I believe I am well-suited to serve in this position based on my public policy and management experience. Following my graduation from Stanford, I worked in the U.S. House for 13 years, first as a legislative staffer, then as a Chief of Staff. As a legislative staffer, my portfolio included housing policy, and I later had the opportunity to really focus on this topic, as it was a priority for Congressman Luetkemeyer in his role as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance. An example of the policies we worked on is H.R. 3700, the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act (HOTMA), which passed both the House and Senate unanimously and was signed into law by President Obama in 2016.

In addition to focusing on policy matters, I gained valuable management experience in the course of building, organizing, and leading a team of staffers in Missouri and Washington. I worked to ensure our entire team was involved in a collaborative process to craft sound initiatives. This included everything from generating ideas, to reviewing research, to developing partnerships and building coalitions. All of this was done with one underlying objective in mind: to improve the lives of the people we served.

In July 2017, I left my position in the House to join HUD as General Deputy Assistant Secretary and Acting Assistant Secretary in the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations. Besides affording me the opportunity to work with many of the Senators and staff in this room, this role has also allowed me to interact with all of the Department's program and support offices, across silos, including PD&R. Prior to being nominated, I worked with PD&R's staff on a variety of issues including grants, university partnerships, technical assistance, and disaster response.

PD&R has an outstanding team of dedicated civil servants. If confirmed, I very much look forward to leading that team, advocating for its work, and ensuring that its products meet Congress' intent and are utilized for the betterment of those served by HUD. Our policy solutions should be evidenced-based, backed by sound data, and tested by well-designed demonstrations and thorough research.

In closing, I believe my housing policy and management experience in the legislative and executive branches has prepared me well to serve as Assistant Secretary. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this Committee to advance policies that address the priorities and needs of the American people. I would be pleased to answer your questions and honored to earn your support.