

Opening Statement
Chairman Sherrod Brown
Nomination Hearing on Deputy HUD Secretary and FTA Administrator
May 11, 2021

Today we'll consider the nominations of two distinguished public servants: Adrienne Todman to serve as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Nuria Fernandez to serve as Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration.

Thank you for your desire to continue to serve the public.

Our government works best when it reflects the country. For the second time since the start of the Biden-Harris Administration, our committee will consider two qualified women of color for senior positions.

If confirmed, Ms. Fernandez will be the first woman of color to serve as FTA Administrator, and Ms. Todman will be the first Black woman to serve as Deputy Secretary of HUD.

Now we have a once in-a-generation opportunity to rebuild our country's infrastructure.

The investments that HUD and FTA can make have the potential to rebuild and bring down the cost of housing and transportation for workers and their families. And these investments will create jobs and grow local economies in neighborhoods and communities that Wall Street and Washington have left on their own for too long.

At previous hearings, this Committee has heard about parents and their children being evicted from their homes in Columbus in the middle of a pandemic. We heard about a restaurant worker in Cincinnati who had to spend her entire day's paycheck on an Uber to get to work, because the bus didn't run that route on Sundays.

These stories aren't unique to Ohio.

Millions of people pay too much for housing. So many of our houses and apartment buildings are in desperate need of repair.

Too many Americans had to turn down a job because there is no affordable way to get to work, or had to miss a doctor's appointment because their car broke down and no bus was running nearby.

And we know who is most likely to lose out on opportunities because of our outdated infrastructure – it's the same Black and brown communities that have been denied investment over and over.

Time and time again, federal policies have left them to fend for themselves, instead of offering the pathways to wealth and opportunity.

Today's nominees understand the challenges we face. And they're obviously ready.

Adrienne Todman led the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, where she worked with housing and community development leaders across the country. She has also run Washington, D.C.'s public housing agency and has experience implementing national policy from her prior work at HUD. Her experience running these large, public-sector organizations will serve her well as Deputy Secretary of HUD.

Nuria Fernandez is one of the most experienced and qualified nominees to lead the FTA ever. In fact, she has already served the agency as its Deputy Administrator and Acting Administrator during the Clinton Administration.

Before rejoining FTA this year, Ms. Fernandez ran the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority. She is an industry expert at delivering complex, high-profile infrastructure projects, and like all of the witnesses we bring in front of this committee, she understands the dignity of work. High quality transit wouldn't be possible without its workers. She has dedicated significant time during her career to ensuring that transit workers have the training they need to safely and efficiently do their work, serving the public.

Whether you are in our in urban communities, rural communities, or in Indian Country –HUD and FTA have critical roles in helping us make equitable and sustainable infrastructure investments so we can build thriving communities.

I look forward to hearing from both Ms. Fernandez and Ms. Todman today, and moving their nominations through this committee quickly, so they can get to work serving the American people.

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