

Ranking Member Pat Toomey (R-Pa.)  
Opening Statement  
Executive Session  
December 2, 2021 at 9:00 PM

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Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Today we will be voting on four nominees: Alanna McCargo for President of Ginnie Mae, Arun Venkataraman for Commerce Assistant Secretary and Director General of the United States and Foreign Commercial Service, Elizabeth de Leon Bhargava for HUD Assistant Secretary for Administration, and Arthur Jemison for HUD Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing.

I'll be opposing Mr. Jemison's nomination. If confirmed, he would be responsible for administering \$65 billion in new public housing funds in the Democrats' reckless tax-and-spend bill. The Biden administration didn't even request this amount. It requested only \$40 billion. So why does this bill have \$80 billion?

Well, it just so happens that the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) wanted \$40 billion for itself. But our Democrat colleagues can't pass a bill that sends 100 percent of public housing money to New York City. That would be a bit of a problem for the 48 Democratic senators who don't represent New York.

So instead, Senator Chuck Schumer promised to "double down" on the administration's proposal and "use all of my power as majority leader ... to secure a funding package that can restore and transform NYCHA." And lo and behold, we now have \$65 billion, substantially all of which will not be distributed using the existing statutory formula but rather by executive fiat.

Specifically, \$53 billion of this money can be distributed solely at the HUD Secretary's discretion. That's more than enough to cover the \$40 billion Senator Schumer demanded to bail out NYCHA, a housing authority plagued by scandals, bribery, and chronic mismanagement.

This certainly looks a lot like Senator Schumer securing a \$40 billion earmark, or "Schu-mark." As a result, it appears that 60% of all of the bill's public housing dollars will go to NYCHA, even though NYCHA only operates 20% of the public housing in the United States.

The Democrats' reckless tax-and-spend bill also contains a provision that waives the Faircloth Amendment, which is a bipartisan law that sensibly caps the number of net-new public housing units, in favor of other forms of assistance like tenant-based vouchers. Both parties enacted this law more than twenty years ago because they recognized that public housing projects concentrate poverty and crime and trap families in generational cycles of dependency and despair.

I asked Mr. Jemison to commit to not giving over half of the bill's public housing funds to NYCHA and not allowing public housing authorities to exceed their Faircloth Amendment limits. Mr. Jemison would not commit to either of these reasonable requests.

So I went to his boss, HUD Secretary Marcia Fudge, and asked her to commit to these reasonable requests. Secretary Fudge also refused to make these commitments.

Their responses make clear that Democrats intend to use \$40 billion of taxpayer dollars to bail out New York City's chronically mismanaged housing authority.

A vote for Mr. Jemison is a vote for the \$40 billion "Schu-mark" and expanding government-controlled public housing. For these reasons, I oppose Mr. Jemison's nomination.