



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20410-0001

THE SECRETARY

September 26, 2001

On September 11, 2001, terrorists attacked the United States, hoping that with the destruction of lives and buildings, they could also destroy a nation. In the two weeks since, we have all heard reports of Muslims, Arabs, Indians, Pakistanis, and others in this country who – simply because of their heritage or religious beliefs – have become innocent targets for the hate of others. The acts committed upon them range from discrimination to actual shootings that have resulted in death.

As Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, I enforce the Fair Housing Act and the other federal laws that prohibit discrimination and the intimidation of people in their homes. These laws cover virtually all housing in the United States – private homes, apartment buildings, and condominium developments – and virtually all housing transactions, including the rental and sale of housing and the provision of mortgage loans.

It is a violation of federal law to refuse to rent or sell homes to people because of their race, religion, or national origin. Landlords who attempt to evict residents on any of these grounds violate federal law. If my Department learns of such practices, we will vigorously pursue the violators on behalf of those whose rights have been violated.

The very fabric of our nation is the rich diversity of our people. For that reason, I ask that all of us in the housing industry demonstrate the true strength of America by committing ourselves to the unity of spirit upon which this nation was founded.

As President Bush said in his address to the nation, “We are in a fight for our principles, and our first responsibility is to live by them. No one should be singled out for unfair treatment or unkind words because of their ethnic background or religious faith.”

Anyone who believes they have experienced housing discrimination is asked to call HUD’s Housing Discrimination Hotline at 1-800-669-9777. They can also visit HUD’s fair housing website at <http://www.hud.gov/complaints/housediscrim.cfm>.

Through his leadership, President Bush has made it clear that now is a time for unity. In that spirit, I am confident that this nation’s families can count on the support of the housing industry and their fellow Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mel Martinez".

Mel Martinez