



## San Diego Youth Homelessness Consortium Statement on Proposed HUD Rule Change

The San Diego Youth Homelessness Consortium strongly opposes the Trump Administration's proposed changes to the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Equal Access Rule, which would eliminate protections to ensure that transgender people experiencing homelessness can access shelter.

The Equal Access rule currently requires that all owners and operators of shelters that provide federally-funded services "grant equal access to facilities, benefits, accommodations, and services to individuals in accordance with the individual's gender identity, and in a manner that affords equal access to the individual's family."

The Trump Administration's proposal would allow federally funded housing services to turn away individuals whose gender does not "match" the sex they were assigned at birth. The proposed rule, according to HUD's Secretary Ben Carson, would "better accommodate religious beliefs of shelter providers." Shelters would be authorized to turn away someone based upon their "good faith belief" of a client's biological sex. According to The National Center for Transgender Equality, one in five transgender Americans has been homeless at some point in their lives. One in five transgender people in the U.S. has been discriminated against when seeking a home, and more than one in ten have been evicted from their homes, because of their gender identity. The change proposed is discriminatory as it would make it significantly more difficult for youth and young adults who are transgender to access safe and stable housing through facilities funded by HUD.

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and rising levels of unsheltered homelessness, it is unacceptable that the Trump Administration would allow publicly funded shelters to deny access to life-saving assistance to our most vulnerable populations. This proposal endangers transgender people who are denied access to safe and secure housing and compromises the safety of those forced to use shelters that contradict their gender, particularly transgender girls and women. Transgender women, especially Black and brown women, are killed at a disproportionate rate. Eliminating transgender women and girl's access to shelters will increase their susceptibility to violence, which has already been characterized as an urgent epidemic in need of immediate address.

Mara Keisling, the Executive Director of The National Center for Transgender Equality, emphasizes that "discrimination and criminalization have left countless transgender people,



particularly transgender people of color, exposed to violence and abuse, all while family rejection can leave transgender youth with nowhere to turn. Secretary Carson is contradicting the very mission of his department by trying to make shelters less safe for those who need them and further endangering the lives of marginalized people. We will fight this rule like trans lives depend on it because trans lives do depend on it.”

We cannot end homelessness if federal agencies encourage shelters to refuse help to people in need based on their gender and sex. This is a dangerous proposal that will embolden violence against transgender people. The SDYHC calls on the Trump Administration to abandon this discriminatory proposal. Our 32 member agencies have committed to the adherence of our mission, purpose and values which include that all systems will be inclusive, that all programs and services will be accessible and responsive to youth, parents, and caregivers with varying abilities and cultural, race, color, language, socioeconomic, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and religious backgrounds and therefore have made an affirmative commitment to serving transgender and non-binary people regardless of United States Department of Housing and Urban Development’s actions.