

National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)  
Written Statement In Response To  
Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Hearing On  
State of Housing  
February 9, 2023

The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) submits this statement to emphasize the many important issues brought forth at the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs hearing held on February 9, 2023 entitled “State of Housing”. The speakers rightly emphasized numerous obstacles facing housing opportunities for Americans today. Our statement intends to highlight many of these problems and how they impact persons with disabilities.

NDRN is the non-profit membership association of Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agencies located in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the United States Territories. In addition, there is a P&A affiliated with the Native American Consortium which includes the Hopi, Navajo, and San Juan Southern Paiute Nations in the Four Corners region of the Southwest. P&A agencies are authorized under various federal statutes to provide legal representation and related advocacy services, and to investigate abuse and neglect of individuals with disabilities in a variety of settings. The P&A Network comprises the nation’s largest provider of legally-based advocacy services for persons with disabilities.

The hearing addressed a spectrum of issues related to housing availability and affordability. However, little to no discussion of the accessibility of housing for persons with disabilities was discussed. The country currently faces a severe shortage of accessible housing options. This means housing equipped with accommodations such as elevators, large and accessible bathrooms, and sufficient accessible parking spots do not exist.

In concert with a lack of accessible housing is the fact that a large fraction of Americans with disabilities live below the poverty line. This is the product of a combination of issues such as a lack of access to an education and vocational rehabilitation services, and discrimination by employers. Consequently, this population requires both accessible and affordable housing.

The need for both accessible and affordable housing makes the problem even more significant. The improvement or new development of affordable and accessible housing is greatly lacking. Consequently, there are simply not enough accessible units to accommodate the number of Americans who need them. Additionally, reports have shown that many accessible and affordable units are currently occupied by persons who do not need the physical access options.

NDRN writes this comment to emphasize the responsibility of Congress to implement programs that will require and encourage the increase in development of both affordable **and** accessible housing options. Over time, Congress has discussed many policies to remedy this problem. For instance, Congress has explored programs where grants may be provided to housing developers who increase the number of accessible units. A myriad of methods can be explored to improve access to affordable and accessible housing in the United States. NDRN urges the committee to consider these issues when it explores housing issues. Furthermore, accessibility needs should not be an afterthought in housing discussions, but instead should be at the forefront of issues to help address our housing needs.

Again, thank you for holding this important hearing and for the opportunity to submit comments. Please feel free to reach out to Claire Stanley at [Claire.stanley@ndrn.org](mailto:Claire.stanley@ndrn.org) with any questions.