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August 14, 2015

Michelle M. Aronowitz, Deputy General Counsel  
Jeanine Worden, Associate General Counsel  
820 First St NE  
Washington, DC 20002

*Sent via e-mail and U.S. mail*

RE: Crime Free Housing Ordinances and Federal Tenant Protections

Dear Ms. Aronowitz and Ms. Worden,

The Housing Justice Unit of the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law advocates to preserve affordable housing and to protect the rights of low-income tenants. We, along with the undersigned organizations, are writing in response to the harmful effects we have seen crime free housing ordinances and lease addenda have on the lives of tenants living in federally subsidized housing. We have seen how these ordinances can increase housing instability, place survivors of domestic and sexual violence at risk of eviction based on the actions of their abusers, and place individuals with disabilities at risk of homelessness for calling 911 to seek emergency assistance. Despite the fact that they create several conflicts with federal tenant protections—including good cause eviction protections and the Violence Against Women Act—these ordinances are routinely enforced against tenants living in federally subsidized housing throughout the country.

We urge the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to take prompt action to ensure that federal tenant protections are not undermined at a local level through the enforcement of these flawed ordinances. Specifically, we urge HUD to issue an opinion clarifying that, to the extent they conflict with the federal laws and regulations protecting tenants who live in subsidized properties, housing authorities and project owners should not be enforcing these ordinances against their tenants or executing any crime-free lease addendum proposed or required by local governments. The attached memorandum provides more detailed information on the harmful effects of crime free housing ordinances and lease addenda, along with the conflicts they create with federal law. Should you need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Kate Walz ([katewalz@povertylaw.org](mailto:katewalz@povertylaw.org)) or Jenna Prochaska ([jennaprochaska@povertylaw.org](mailto:jennaprochaska@povertylaw.org)). Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law

National Housing Law Project

American Civil Liberties Union, Women's Rights Project

Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc.

Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, Inc.