

**Statement of the Honorable Wm. Lacy Clay
Before the
Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development
“The Section Housing Assistance Program: Promoting Decent Affordable Housing
for Families and Individuals Who Rent”**

June 10, 2003

**GOOD MORNING, MR. CHAIRMAN, RANKING MEMBER WATERS,
MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE AND WITNESSES.**

**I ESPECIALLY WANT TO WELCOME MR. NEIL MOLLOY, EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR, ST. Louis COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY, ST. LOUIS,
MISSOURI WHO IS APPEARING ON BEHALF OF THE PUBLIC HOUSING
AUTHORITIES DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION (PHADA). THANK YOU FOR
BEING HERE, MR. MOLLOY.**

**I WILL OPEN AS I CLOSED IN THE PREVIOUS HEARING. SECTION 8
VOUCHERS ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY AND ARE PROPOSED TO BE PLACED
IN A VOUCHER GRANT PROGRAM FOR THE STATES IN 2005 AND I DO
NOT BELIEVE THAT IT WILL WORK. WHEN WE CONSIDER THE DIRES
FINANCIAL STAITs MOST STATES ARE IN AT THE PRESENT, WITH NO
RELIEF IN SIGHT, IT WOULD BE A DISAASTER TO PLACE SECTION 8
VOUCHERS IN BLOCK GRANTS. STATES WOULD HAVE NO CHOICE
THAN TO ATTEMPT TO MANIPULATE FUNDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF
PAYING FOR SHORTFALLS IN OTHER AREAS.**

**THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM IS A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL
PROGRAM THAT IS COST EFFECTIVE. THIS PROGRAM IS ONE THAT
WORKS. I HAVE MY SUSPICIONS ABOUT TINKERING WITH PROGRAMS
THAT WORK WHILE LEAVING NEGLECTING AREAS OF GOVERNMENT
THAT NEED ATTENTION. WHY THE CHANGE? HUD ALREADY HAS THE
ABILITY WITHIN IT EXISTING AUTHORIZATION TO IMPLEMENT
REGULATORY REFORMS TO IMPROVE THE PROGRAM WHERE DEEMED
NECESSARY. THE LONG RANGE PLANS, I SUSPECT, ARE TO DISMANTLE
THE SECTION 8 PROGRAM AND THAT IS A SHAME.**

**WE ARE TO GIVE THE PROGRAM TO THE STATES THAT ARE
WOEFULLY UNDERTRAINED IN THE ADMINISTERING OF THE
PROGRAM. HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE FOR THE STATES TO GET
SUFFICIENT EXPERIENCE TO APPROACH THE FUNCTIONING LEVEL OF
THE FEDERAL PROGRAM? WHAT IS THERE TO INDICATE THAT THE
STATES ARE FULLY PREPARED TO ADMINISTER THIS PROGRAM?**

WHEN I LAST LOOKED, THE SECTION 8 VOUCHER PROGRAM SERVED OVER 2 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS AS HUD'S LARGEST PROGRAM FOR ASSISTED HOUSING.

THERE ARE MANY QUESTIONS THAT HAVE TO BE ANSWERED ABOUT THIS NEEDLESS TRANSFER OF ADMINISTRATION OF THE SECTION 8 PROGRAM TO THE STATES. I DON'T THINK THAT THE ANSWERS WILL BE SUFFICIENT OR THAT THEY WILL MAKE A SENSIBLE CASE FOR CHANGING THE PROGRAM.

MR. CHAIRMAN, I ASK UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO SUBMIT MY STATEMENT TO THE RECORD.