



Harvard Model Congress Boston 2024

Fair Housing Update

By Miguel Chiapetta

Despite not typically being a motivator that drives voters to the polls on election day, fair and affordable housing is a topical issue in the United States with young voters (18-34) ranking housing as the second most pressing issue in America (Smialek, 2023). According to the Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED), rents have skyrocketed by almost 22% since late 2019, burdening tenants and exacerbating housing insecurity. Even more alarmingly, housing prices have consistently risen every year, with buyers experiencing a staggering 46% increase since 2019 (FRED, 2024). This trend not only widens the wealth gap but also exacerbates socioeconomic inequalities, making homeownership increasingly elusive for many Americans. Consequently, marginalized communities, including minorities and low-income households, face disproportionate barriers to accessing stable and affordable housing, perpetuating cycles of poverty and disenfranchisement. Thus, homeownership becomes increasingly more inequitable and proves to be reserved only for the privileged.

Consequently, the 2024 Presidential hopefuls have all taken strides to address these issues, albeit with markedly distinct approaches and strategies. President Joe Biden's administration has prioritized tackling the inequities in homeownership by implementing comprehensive federal initiatives aimed at making housing more accessible and affordable for all Americans. One of the key pillars of Biden's housing policy revolves around leveraging federal grants to incentivize local governments to revise their zoning regulations, fostering more flexible and inclusive housing policies (Smialek, 2023). However, in Republican Presidential candidate Nikki Haley's campaign, she advocates against federal involvement in the quest for more accessible housing. Haley, rather, insists solutions to homeowner's and prospective buyer's worries must come from local and state governments (ABC News, 2023). Former President Donald Trump takes a similar stance as Haley. During his previous term, Trump's approach to housing policy centered on a vision of revitalizing suburban communities by curbing the presence of low-income housing developments, which he and many conservative supporters believed would safeguard property values and preserve the character of suburban neighborhoods. Thus far in his campaign, he has promoted similar plans.

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