

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

HUD Is Following the Law in Westchester, as It Must

The outstanding issues between HUD and Westchester County are not about a "racial engineering project," as your editorial asserts.

July 13, 2014 1:59 p.m. ET

Regarding your editorial "[Westchester USA](#)" (July 8): To be clear, HUD did not initiate the complaint against Westchester County. In 2006, the Anti-Discrimination Center of metro New York sued Westchester, alleging that the county received \$50 million in federal funds over the prior six years by falsely claiming that it was affirmatively furthering fair housing, a requirement under federal law. Two federal courts ruled against Westchester County, and it faced \$150 million in damages to the federal government.

HUD became involved only then because we believed that instead of paying millions in damages, county residents would be better served by a settlement in which the county would invest in new, affordable housing and promote fair housing policies. HUD and the Justice Department negotiated a settlement with Westchester County to achieve that goal. Westchester County has complied with some settlement terms and is meeting affordable housing unit-development benchmarks. However, the county refuses to meet its obligation to complete a comprehensive Analysis of Impediments, which would identify barriers to more diverse communities and help local governments address those barriers.

Asking Westchester County to complete this analysis—as every town and county must do to qualify for HUD grants—is not an attempt to rewrite local zoning laws; it ensures compliance with federal law.

While the county asserts that its overall population of black and Hispanic residents represents diversity, the reality is these populations are concentrated only within a few towns. Instead of trying to understand and address this data through a comprehensive analysis, the county simply denies that segregation exists.

The outstanding issues between HUD and Westchester County are not about a "racial engineering project," as your editorial asserts—unless you consider the Fair Housing Act of

1968 to be such. It is about adhering to the law. The Fair Housing Act and HUD's fair-housing requirements have been in effect for decades. It is time for the county executive to comply.

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Washington

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