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LDF Issues Statement on President Biden’s Executive Actions on Private Prisons and Fair Housing

Today, President Biden announced executive actions seeking to “advance racial equity and support for underserved communities,” including an Executive Order directing the Department of Justice (DOJ) not to renew contracts with private prisons – effectively ending federal use of private prisons – and a Presidential Memorandum directing the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to examine the actions taken by the Trump Administration to weaken fair housing policies and laws. It also directs HUD to take steps based on that analysis to fully implement the requirements of the Fair Housing Act.

In response to these actions, Sherrilyn Ifill, President and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), released the following statement:

“President Biden’s actions today, and his affirmation in the strongest terms of his commitment to work to tackle systemic racial injustice and inequality turns the page on the corrosive and aggressive policies of the Trump Administration on matters of race and inequality.

“We are encouraged to see the Biden Administration bring an end to the federal government’s reliance on private prisons. The decision to end new agreements between the Department of Justice and private prisons was first undertaken during the Obama Administration, but the Trump Administration renewed the practice.

“President Biden’s Executive Order is an important step in the right direction, but there is more to be done. The ban on contracts with private prisons should be extended to cover immigration detention facilities managed by the Department of Health & Human Services. And we must remember that while the United States has the largest private prison population in the world, it only equals 10% of the entire U.S. prison population. We hope that the Administration will also turn its urgent attention to the dangerous and inhumane conditions inside the nation’s prisons, and that the new Attorney General, once confirmed, will regard addressing unconstitutionally inhumane prison conditions as a priority for investigation and action by the Department of Justice.

“We are also gratified by today’s Memorandum reaffirming the federal government’s role in ensuring fair and equitable housing policies – a welcome step after years of the Trump Administration’s systematic dismantling of discrimination protections. We welcome the prioritization of this essential federal role in advancing equity and look forward to working to reverse the devastating practices undertaken by HUD during the Trump Administration, and to advancing a bold, progressive vision of fair housing.

“Finally, we are encouraged by the President’s commitment to building a relationship of dialogue and engagement with Native American tribes and leaders, and to ensuring that

Asian American communities are protected against hate crimes and discrimination fomented by the racist rhetoric of former President Trump about the origins of the COVID-19 virus. Although each of these actions is one small step, collectively they constitute a promising early statement of this administration's attention to the critical issues facing our communities."

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization. LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Follow LDF on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).