



## Rep. Tom Emmer on Financial Services Committee - January 21, 2026

### Committmee Meeting

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#### **\*\*REP. TOM EMMER:**

\*\* Thank you, Chairman Hill, and thanks for holding this critically important hearing today. Secretary Turner, it's great to see you again.

#### **\*\*SECRETARY TURNER:**

\*\* Yes, sir.

#### **\*\*REP. TOM EMMER:**

\*\* Housing affordability is one of the most pressing challenges facing Minnesota families. Across urban, suburban, and rural communities, families are being squeezed by rising home prices and a housing supply that simply has not kept pace with demand. Outdated, burdensome federal regulations, slow permitting processes, rigid zoning laws, and financing barriers are all factors that make it more difficult and expensive to meet America's housing needs. President Trump has made affordability a central focus of his presidency, reversing the failed policies of the Biden administration and cutting red tape that was only increasing costs and fueling runaway inflation. By updating outdated programs and removing regulatory roadblocks rather than relying solely on direct federal spending, we will allow this country to meet its housing demands and make housing affordable again for hardworking Americans. Mr. Secretary HUD has a responsibility not only to expand access to housing, but also to ensure that taxpayer dollars are properly safeguarded. My home state of Minnesota has become a national example of the chaos that occurs when oversight collapses and incompetence surges in a governor's mansion. Following the uncovering of a massive 9 billion welfare fraud scheme that went unressed under Governor Tim Walz's watch, you Mr. Secretary proactively deployed HUD investigators to Minnesota to provide much needed fiscal oversight. And on behalf of law-abiding taxpaying motans, I want to thank you for taking decisive action where our governor has failed. It's been reported that HUD paid out nearly 85 million in fraudulent federal housing assistant payments to Minnesota during the last year of former President Biden's presidency. Is that correct, Secretary Turner?

#### **\*\*SECRETARY TURNER:**

\*\* Yes, sir. Those were the findings

#### **\*\*REP. TOM EMMER:**

\*\* and it's my understanding that of this total half a million dollars was paid out to dead Minnesota residents while another quarter of a million dollars went to individuals whose social security numbers couldn't be verified. Is that correct?

#### **SECRETARY TURNER:**



Yes, sir.

**REP. TOM EMMER:**

And when we say that individuals whose social security numbers could not be verified, Mr. Secretary, what exactly do you mean?

**SECRETARY TURNER:**

Well, when you think about there may be numbers missing, there be may be smudges on the number. Often times that means that they are here illegally.

**REP. TOM EMMER:**

All right? So, likely they're illegal aliens that have taken advantage of this system. In other words, as American families struggled to afford housing and keep up with everyday costs, the federal government was providing assistance to those here illegally, taking resources away from the citizens that these programs are actually created to help. It's abundantly clear to me that those who line their pockets by defrauding the American people along with those who did nothing to stop it must be held accountable. How can HUD hold these individuals feet to the fire and potentially recoup these fraudulent payments?

**SECRETARY TURNER:**

Yes, sir. Thank you. As we go through this continued analysis and investigation, we will use the full extent of the law to enforce the law and to bring the proper and appropriate punishment to those who have defrauded the American people.

**REP. TOM EMMER:**

What additional authorities, Mr. Secretary, does HUD have to examine other areas where Governor Walz and Minnesota's Attorney General Keith Ellison have been negligent in their stewardship of the people of Minnesota?

**\*\*SECRETARY TURNER:**

\*\* Yes, sir. We will continue to investigate. We have actually boots on the ground now, as you know, in Minnesota. Minnesota receives about \$150 million in housing assistance. So, we want to make sure that those funds are being used appropriately. And we also have partnerships across the entire federal government and in particular agencies that we can utilize to make sure people are being held accountable.

**\*\*REP. TOM EMMER:**

\*\* This is the new fair housing investigation that you're engaged in.

**\*\*SECRETARY TURNER:**

\*\* Yes, sir. And we do have a task force to do so.

**\*\*REP. TOM EMMER:**

\*\* I see my time is coming to an end, so I'd like to quickly highlight the Securing Facilities for Mental Health Services Act, which I partnered with Representative Torres to reintroduce last week. We have a mental health crisis in this country. All while having a shortage of care facilities. Under current law, inpatient psychiatric hospitals are prohibited from accessing mortgage assistance through HUD's section 242 program since they



treat patients over an extended period of time. Our securing facilities for mental health services act reverses this prohibition alleviating the inpatient bed shortage across the country and encourages the expansion of psychiatric inpatient hospitals. Mr. Secretary, can I get your assurance that we'll work together on this much-needed legislation so we can assure that Americans with mental health challenges are able to receive the treatment they deserve and need?

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For questions or corrections: [mn06watch@gmail.com](mailto:mn06watch@gmail.com)