

The Biden-Harris Administration's Housing Policy Agenda: A Conversation with Lael Brainard, National Economic Advisor

Speaker Biographies

Opening Remarks

Mary K. Cunningham is senior vice president for research management and program development at the Urban Institute, overseeing Urban's research and policy centers. Previously, she was Urban's vice president for metropolitan housing and communities policy, where researchers and policy experts work to bolster affordable housing, eradicate homelessness, facilitate land-use and zoning reform for equitable development, improve transportation access, foster opportunity-rich neighborhoods and cities, and fortify communities against the challenges of climate change. As a researcher, she studied housing and homelessness for more than 25 years. Cunningham launched and directed the Homelessness Research Institute, the research and education arm of the National Alliance to End Homelessness. She also cochaired a research council on homelessness composed of nationally recognized academics and policy researchers. Cunningham has been cited in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and *USA Today*. She has been a guest on *The Weeds* podcast, *News Hour*, and *CBS Morning News*. She started her career as a caseworker for families with housing vouchers at Metro Housing|Boston (formerly, the Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership) and has an MPP from Georgetown University.

Keynote Speaker

Lael Brainard is the 14th Director of the National Economic Council. Prior to this role, she served as the Vice Chair of the Federal Reserve, Undersecretary of the Treasury for International Affairs, and Deputy Director of the National Economic Council. She was also Vice President at the Brookings Institution. Brainard received her Masters and PhD in Economics from Harvard and was an Associate Professor of Economics at the MIT Sloan School of Management.

Speakers

Laura Arce is Senior Vice President for Economic Initiatives at UnidosUS. Laura rejoined UnidosUS in 2022 to develop, launch, and lead the "Home Ownership Means Equity" (HOME) Initiative – a multi-year institutional priority that seeks to transform the economic trajectory of Latinos through homeownership. Prior to rejoining UnidosUS, Laura was Senior Vice President for Public Policy for Wells Fargo & Co. where she led public policy analysis and external engagement on consumer banking, consumer lending, and community reinvestment. During her tenure at Wells Fargo, Laura served as Vice Chair and then Chair of the Mortgage Bankers Association's Residential Loan Administration Committee. She previously served as Senior Policy Analyst at the Federal Housing Finance Agency where she oversaw reforms to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac mortgage servicing policies and products during the foreclosure crisis. During her tenure at FHFA, Laura was awarded the Distinguished Service Award and served as an Excellence in Government Fellow. Laura has over 20 years of experience in financial services and Washington, DC with senior positions in the private, nonprofit, and public sectors. Laura began her career at UnidosUS (formerly the National Council of La Raza). During her first tour at UnidosUS, she successfully co-authored the certification application for the Raza Development Fund, the first CDFI sponsored by a civil rights organization, and secured federal funding to establish a national network of housing counseling agencies

focused on increasing Latino homeownership. Laura currently sits on Fannie Mae's Affordable Housing Advisory Council. She has previously sat on the boards of the Mission Asset Fund and Community Tax Aid. Laura is a first-generation American and a second-generation graduate of the University of California at Berkeley. She holds a master's degree in urban planning from Rutgers University where she was a Community Development Fellow. Laura grew up in Oakland, CA – bilingual and bicultural – and is based in Washington, DC.

Peggy Bailey is the Vice President for Housing and Income Security at the Center on Budget and Policy priorities. She oversees the Center's work to protect and expand access to affordable housing, improve state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and child support programs and expand employment opportunities to housing and cash assistance recipients. Throughout her career, she has helped build connections between the housing community and health, nutrition, child welfare, and other systems of care, amid growing recognition that access to stable, affordable housing is a necessary foundation that enables people with low incomes to meet other basic needs and to make progress towards achieving their hopes and dreams. Bailey's work is centered in identifying the ways racism and discrimination in housing policy have resulted in disinvestment in communities of color and created disparate outcomes for people in marginalized groups. Prior to rejoining the Center in 2022, Bailey served in the Biden/Harris Administration as the Senior Advisor on Rental Assistance to HUD Secretary Marcia L. Fudge. Bailey holds a B.A. in Government from the University of Notre Dame, and a Master of Public Affairs from the University of Texas at Dallas.

Michael Neal (Presentation/Presenter and panelist) is a principal research associate in the Housing Finance Policy Center at the Urban Institute. Previously, he worked at Fannie Mae, where he was a director of economics in the Economic and Strategic Research Group. Before his service at Fannie Mae, Neal was the assistant vice president at the National Association of Home Builders' Economic and Housing Policy department. As a housing economist, Neal has an in-depth knowledge of housing market trends and has provided expert analysis and commentary on housing to media outlets around the country. Previously, he worked at Congress's Joint Economic Committee, the Federal Reserve System, the Congressional Budget Office, and Goldman Sachs. Neal has a bachelor's degree in economics from Morehouse College and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Pennsylvania. Neal is a member of the Homeownership Working Group for Project REACH, serves on the advisory board for the Ashoka-Brookings Challenge, and works as an independent consultant for AlphaSights.

Jim Parrott is a nonresident fellow at the Urban Institute and owner of Parrott Ryan Advisors, which provides strategic advice on housing finance issues to financial institutions active in the primary and secondary mortgage market. Before joining Urban in 2013, Parrott spent several years in the Obama White House as a senior adviser at the National Economic Council, where he led the team of advisers charged with counseling the cabinet and president on housing issues. He was on point for developing the administration's major housing policy positions; articulating and defending those positions with Congress, the press, and public; and counseling White House leadership on related communications and legislative strategy. Before his time in the White House, Parrott was counsel to Secretary Donovan at the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Before that, he was a litigator, first in New York with Sullivan and Cromwell, and later in North Carolina with Smith Anderson. Parrott has a BA in philosophy from the University of North Carolina, an MA in philosophy from the University of Washington, and a JD from Columbia Law School. He was a Peace Corps volunteer and served in Sri Lanka. He currently serves on the local advisory board of the Ackland Museum of Art in Chapel Hill, NC.

Janneke Ratcliffe is vice president for housing finance policy and leads the Housing Finance Policy Center at the Urban Institute. Over a career that spans industry, the nonprofit sector, academic research, and the federal government, her work focuses on increasing access to financial systems that foster economic security and prosperity. Ratcliffe came to Urban from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, where she served as assistant director, leading its Office of Financial Education. Previously, she was the executive director of the University of North Carolina Center for Community Capital, leading “transformative research on how mortgage markets and financial services can better promote financial security and economic opportunity.” Ratcliffe has also served at GE Capital Mortgage, the Center for American Progress, and Self-Help, where she was instrumental in high-impact programs in affordable and Community Reinvestment Act mortgages and community development finance. Ratcliffe serves on the Consumer Affairs Advisory Council of the Mortgage Bankers Association, and she is a member of the National Community Stabilization Trust Board of Managers. She is a graduate of UNC at Chapel Hill, where she studied economics and French.