



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20410-0500

October 2, 2001

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

Jim Boulet, Jr.  
English First  
8001 Forbes Place, Suite 102  
Springfield, VA 22151

Dear Mr. Boulet:

This letter is in response to your September 4, 2001, letter to Secretary Mel Martinez regarding the status of Executive Order 13166 and HUD's related regulations or policies.

In your letter, you state that Executive Order 13166 "declared that language choice is a protected civil right." This is a misinterpretation of the language and purpose of the Order. Executive Order 13166 is meant to make certain that reasonable steps are taken to ensure meaningful access for people who, because of limited English proficiency, cannot access government and government-funded programs and activities in English. Specifically, the Order requires that federal agencies take reasonable steps to make their programs meaningfully accessible to limited English proficient people who are eligible to be served or who are directly affected by federally conducted programs or activities. It also requires agencies to clarify to their recipients their longstanding obligations to provide such access to beneficiaries under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d, *et seq.*

Executive Order 13166 has been neither repealed by the President or overturned by statute. Further, there has been no indication that the Administration intends to repeal Executive Order 13166. Therefore, HUD is currently reviewing the guidance that it previously drafted in response to the Executive Order, pending direction from the Department of Justice on this matter, expected shortly. HUD's specific guidance will be forthcoming thereafter.

I hope this information is helpful to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harry L. Carey", written over a circular stamp or seal.

Harry L. Carey  
Associate General Counsel  
Office of Fair Housing