2026 NACo Resolutions Submitted by Florida Counties & Commissioners

COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Proposed Resolution on Section 8 and Local Residency Prioritization

Issue: Current U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations permit—but do not require—public housing authorities (PHAs) to establish local residency preferences within the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program and as a result, many jurisdictions experiencing severe housing shortages and rising housing costs are unable to effectively prioritize existing residents when administering voucher lotteries and waiting lists.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports federal legislation and/or HUD guidance authorizing Public Housing Authorities (PHA's) to implement enhanced local residency preferences within the Section 8 HCV program. The policy would allow PHAs to prioritize up to 80 percent of vouchers or waiting list placements for applicants who have resided within the jurisdiction for at least one continuous year. The remaining 20 percent may be prioritized for applicants who have immediate family residing within the jurisdiction or who possess a documented employment offer within the jurisdiction. When implemented, all residency preferences would remain fully compliant with Fair Housing Act and Civil Rights Act requirements.

Background: The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program is administered by local Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) pursuant to federal law and regulations issued by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Nationwide demand for vouchers significantly exceeds available funding, resulting in lotteries or multi-year waiting lists in most jurisdictions. Despite persistent local housing shortages, many PHAs do not utilize residency preferences due to legal uncertainty, administrative burden, and concerns related to federal mobility policy. As a result, local residents frequently compete with applicants from outside the jurisdiction for limited vouchers, even in communities experiencing acute housing cost burdens and supply constraints. This framework can dilute the impact of federal housing assistance by directing scarce resources away from the communities where housing pressures are most severe, limiting PHAs' ability to respond to local housing needs and stabilize existing residents. Federal housing assistance is intended to respond to demonstrated housing need, yet current policy does not ensure that communities with the greatest housing pressures can prioritize residents already affected by those conditions. When local residents lose access to vouchers in highly constrained markets, communities face increased risks of housing instability, displacement, homelessness, and workforce attrition.

Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact: Providing PHAs with clear authority to implement structured local residency preferences would strengthen counties' ability to address localized housing instability and workforce housing shortages. Urban and rapidly growing counties experiencing severe housing cost burdens would benefit from improved housing

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stabilization for existing residents, reduced displacement pressures, and greater workforce retention for essential local employees. Rural and smaller jurisdictions would similarly benefit by allowing limited federal housing resources to better serve existing community members and local labor needs. The proposal would not require significant new federal expenditures but would instead improve the targeting and effectiveness of existing Housing Choice Voucher resources. By prioritizing long-term residents and individuals with documented community or employment ties, counties would be better positioned to reduce homelessness risk, support economic stability, and align federal housing assistance with demonstrated local housing demand. Allowing or requiring residency prioritization would better align federal housing investments with local housing conditions, labor markets, and community stability goals.

Sponsor(s): Kathryn Starkey, Commissioner, Pasco County, Fla.

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2026 NACo Resolutions Submitted by Florida Counties & Commissioners

Proposed Resolution Encouraging State Housing Authorities to Promote Consistent Section 8 Administrative Plan Provisions Supporting Housing for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Issue: While some local housing authorities have adopted Section 8 Administrative Plan provisions that facilitate housing developments serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, inconsistent adoption across jurisdictions creates barriers to project development and limits housing choice for vulnerable populations.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to support efforts to promote consistent adoption of Section 8 Administrative Plan provisions that enable housing authorities to support developments serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This includes working with or directing state housing finance agencies to encourage or require housing authorities receiving state or federal housing funds to adopt administrative policies that recognize the legitimacy of disability-focused housing models, preferences and supportive service partnerships. Such policies should preserve local flexibility while ensuring that housing programs do not inadvertently exclude or disadvantage individuals with disabilities seeking appropriate community-based housing.

Background: Local governments play a critical role in implementing federal housing programs and responding to community needs. In some jurisdictions, proactive administrative policies have enabled innovative housing models that serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities while complying with federal requirements. However, many housing authorities lack awareness or guidance on how to structure their administrative plans to support such projects. This inconsistency creates uncertainty for developers, families, and service providers and limits the scalability of successful housing models. Encouraging statewide alignment through housing finance agencies would promote best practices, reduce administrative friction, and ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to housing opportunities regardless of where they live.

Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact: Promoting consistent Section 8 administrative policies would facilitate efficient use of housing funds, expand housing options for individuals with disabilities, and reduce long- term public costs associated with institutional care. Both urban and rural communities would benefit from increased housing stability and coordinated service delivery.

Sponsor(s): Raquel Regalado, Commissioner, Miami-Dade County, Fla.

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2026 NACo Resolutions Submitted by Florida Counties & Commissioners

Proposed Resolution Urging Congress and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to Modernize Section 504 Regulations to Permit Disability-Specific Housing Options Chosen by Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Issue: Current federal housing nondiscrimination regulations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act restrict the development of disability-specific housing, limiting the ability of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to choose residential settings that provide appropriate supports, amenities and environments tailored to their needs.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to modernize Section 504 regulations to clarify that disability-specific housing is permissible when such housing is voluntarily chosen by residents and designed to promote independence, safety, and community engagement. Federal housing policy should recognize that equal opportunity does not require uniform housing models and that allowing intentional communities and targeted developments expands—not restricts— meaningful choice. HUD should revise its regulations to remove barriers that discourage the development of housing designed for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, while continuing to prohibit unlawful discrimination and ensure access for individuals with disabilities.

Background: Across the country, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities face a severe shortage of affordable and appropriate housing options. Many adults with these disabilities benefit from housing that incorporates specialized design features, assistive technology, on-site supports, and opportunities for social interaction with peers. For many families, disability-specific housing represents the most practical, safe, and cost-effective alternative to institutional care or restrictive group homes. However, current interpretations of Section 504 discourage housing developments that are designed for individuals with specific disabilities, instead permitting only cumbersome “preferences” that are difficult to administer and create legal uncertainty. These interpretations risk equating intentional community design with discrimination, even when residents freely choose such housing and benefit directly from the services and environment provided. Clarifying federal housing policy to permit disability-specific housing would advance the goals of independence, self-direction, and community participation while addressing real-world housing shortages and cost constraints.

Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact: Modernizing Section 504 regulations would expand affordable housing supply, reduce reliance on costly institutional settings, and encourage public-private partnerships in both urban and rural communities. Allowing targeted housing models would produce long-term savings and improve housing stability for individuals with disabilities and their families.

Sponsor(s): Raquel Regalado, Commissioner, Miami-Dade County, Fla.

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2026 NACo Resolutions Submitted by Florida Counties & Commissioners

Proposed Resolution Urging Congress to Promote Workforce Participation of Neurodivergent Individuals through Targeted Federal Incentives and Skills-Based Employment Policies

Issue: Neurodivergent individuals, including individuals with autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, dyslexia and other cognitive or neurological differences, remain significantly underrepresented in the workforce despite possessing valuable skills that can contribute to economic productivity, innovation and workforce stability.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to advance federal workforce policies that increase employment opportunities for neurodivergent individuals through skills- based incentives and workplace supports and to clarify that such efforts are consistent with evolving federal workforce and equal employment policies. Congress should expand and modernize federal incentives that encourage public and private employers to recruit, hire, train, and retain neurodivergent individuals by supporting flexible work arrangements, skills-based hiring practices, job coaching, and reasonable workplace accommodations. These incentives should focus on measurable outcomes such as increased labor force participation, reduced dependency on public assistance, improved employee retention, and overall economic productivity, while preserving employer flexibility and avoiding prescriptive or quota-based requirements.

To this end, NACo urges Congress to advance federal workforce policies that authorize competitive federal grant programs and pilot initiatives, administered through the U.S. Department of Labor, to support county-led and employer-partnered demonstrations of skills-based hiring, alternative assessment methods, job coaching, and structured onboarding models. Congress should further establish targeted federal tax credits for employers that adopt verified workplace accommodations and skills-based hiring practices benefiting neurodivergent employees, with incentives tied to employee retention and advancement rather than initial hiring alone. Eligible costs may include job coaching, assistive technologies, alternative interview processes, and flexible work arrangements. For implementation of these policies, federal agencies may also provide technical assistance and model guidance to support voluntary, performance-based employment practices, with funded programs reporting measurable outcomes such as labor force participation, retention, and reduced reliance on public assistance.

Background: Counties and local governments face persistent workforce shortages across a wide range of sectors, including technology, skilled trades, public administration, logistics, healthcare support, and infrastructure maintenance. At the same time, many neurodivergent individuals remain unemployed or underemployed, not due to lack of capability, but because traditional hiring, onboarding, and workplace practices are not designed to recognize or accommodate different cognitive strengths, communication styles, or work patterns.

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Historically, federal workforce and inclusion efforts have relied heavily on broad diversity, equity, and inclusion frameworks. As federal policy evolves toward a more neutral, skills-based approach, there is an opportunity to reframe neurodivergent employment initiatives around economic participation, individual capability, and workforce performance, rather than identity classification.

Targeted federal incentives, such as tax credits, grant programs, and technical assistance, can encourage employers to adopt practical adjustments that benefit both employees and organizations, including skills- based assessments, alternative interview methods, structured training, and supportive supervision models. By focusing on employability, productivity, and self-sufficiency, federal policy can help ensure that neurodivergent individuals are able to participate meaningfully in the workforce, contribute to their communities, and reduce long-term reliance on public support systems.

Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact: Expanding workforce participation among neurodivergent individuals would strengthen local labor markets, reduce public assistance expenditures, and improve workforce stability for employers in both urban and rural communities. Federal incentives that promote skills-based employment practices would provide long-term economic benefits while allowing counties flexibility to implement programs tailored to local workforce needs.

Sponsor(s): Raquel Regalado, Commissioner, Miami-Dade County, Fla.

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2026 NACo Resolutions Submitted by Florida Counties & Commissioners
Proposed Resolution on Amending Methodology to Calculate Area Median Income

Issue: Approximately 33 percent of Americans are cost-burdened, or spending more than one-third of their gross income on housing expenses, and 13 percent of Americans are extremely cost-burdened, spending more than half of their gross income on housing and housing expenses. Area Median Income, which serves as the income level for households within a specific geographic area, is used by municipalities and public housing authorities to determine affordability thresholds and housing development. However, current methodologies may be more reflective of relative income rather than true affordability within an area. Moreover, more affluent areas may skew averages for a county, causing the average resident to appear wealthier than they actually are.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to draft legislation directing the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development to change methodologies for calculating Area Median Income. NACo further urges Congress to authorize pilot programs that incorporate alternative methods of calculating Area Median Income.

Background: This resolution would urge Congress to change the methodology to calculate Area Median Income. Counties presently rely on guidelines established by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to inform housing development and housing assistance. However, current guidelines may not be reflective of current economic conditions. Changes could allow programs to be bring projects online that are more responsive to economic pressures, especially in jurisdictions that suffer from rapidly rising housing costs.

Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact: Both urban and rural counties would be afforded the chance of expanded access to housing assistance programs, support middle-income workers, reduce housing costs and provide for greater responsiveness to changes in market conditions.

Sponsor(s): Marleine Bastien, Commissioner, Miami-Dade County, Fla.

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2026 NACo Resolutions Submitted by Florida Counties & Commissioners
ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND LAND USE

Proposed Resolution Urging Congress to Clarify and Modernize NEPA to Allow Targeted Modification of Ongoing Environmental Reviews for Infrastructure Projects

Issue: Changes to the scope or design of federally approved infrastructure projects during an ongoing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review can unnecessarily require the environmental review process to restart from the beginning, resulting in delays, increased costs, and inefficiencies even when previously analyzed elements remain unaffected.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to amend the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 et seq.) to clarify that when an infrastructure project undergoing an active NEPA review experiences a change in scope, design, alignment, length, or configuration, the lead federal agency may address such changes through a targeted modification or supplemental environmental analysis rather than requiring preparation of a new Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement. The amended statute should establish a presumption that previously completed portions of the NEPA review remain valid and may be incorporated by reference, provided the change does not materially alter the purpose and need of the project or introduce significant environmental impacts that cannot reasonably be evaluated through supplementation. NACo further urges Congress to direct federal agencies to update their NEPA implementing procedures to ensure consistent application of this approach, including limiting any additional scoping or public review to those geographic areas, resources, or issues directly affected by the modification.

NACo further urges Congress to clarify that project refinements, design adjustments, or mitigation measures identified through public comment during an active NEPA review, where such changes maintain a clear nexus to the original purpose and need of the project and further the same underlying objectives, shall not be deemed a material change requiring the environmental review process to restart. In such cases, the lead federal agency should be authorized to incorporate responsive changes through targeted modification, supplementation, or incorporation by reference, without reopening previously completed analyses unrelated to the modification."

Background: NEPA is a procedural statute intended to ensure informed federal decision-making while allowing agencies to move forward with needed projects. Infrastructure projects, such as roadway expansions, bridge replacements, and resiliency improvements, often evolve during the environmental review process due to engineering refinement, safety considerations, funding availability, or newly identified site conditions.

Under current practice, even modest or discrete changes to project scope, such as adding a roadway segment, extending a bridge span, or modifying an interchange, may be

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treated as requiring a restart of the NEPA process, despite the fact that large portions of the original environmental analysis remain valid and unaffected.

Although federal agencies have historically used supplemental analyses or re-evaluations to address changes, the absence of a clear statutory directive has led to inconsistent application, increased litigation risk, and overly conservative interpretations that delay project delivery. This uncertainty is particularly problematic for county governments, which rely on timely federal approvals to advance transportation, water, flood mitigation, and other critical infrastructure projects.

Clarifying NEPA to expressly allow limited-scope, targeted modification of ongoing environmental reviews would preserve environmental protections while improving efficiency, reducing duplicative analysis, and accelerating delivery of public infrastructure.

Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact: Providing a clear statutory pathway for modifying ongoing NEPA reviews would reduce unnecessary costs and delays for counties and project sponsors, improve predictability in federal permitting, and accelerate infrastructure investment in both urban and rural communities without weakening environmental review standards.

Sponsor(s): Raquel Regalado, Commissioner, Miami-Dade County, Fla.; Bryan T. Havir, Assistant County Administrator, Dorchester County, S.C.

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2026 NACo Resolutions Submitted by Florida Counties & Commissioners
Proposed Resolution Supporting a Two-Year Cycle for RESTORE Act Bucket 2 Grantmaking

Issue: The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council's (Council) voluntary use of a four-year grant- making cycle for deploying the RESTORE Act's Comprehensive Component 'Bucket 2's funds allows for a greater risk of lost purchasing power due to inflation than will a two-year funding cycle. Given the advanced stage of project permitting and planning within the five Gulf States and their federal natural resource agency partners, the adoption of a two-year cycle will safeguard the purchasing power of remaining funds in the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the six Trump Administration Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council members to seek majority support from among the five Gulf State Governors or their Council representatives for Council adoption of a two-year cycle instead of the current four year cycle and to thereby expedite a Funding Priorities List 5 of RESTORE Bucket 2 grantmaking to occur in 2028.

Background: The Deepwater Horizon disaster was a historic oil spill in the Gulf of America in 2010 that spewed 210 million gallons of oil for three months leaving Gulf Coast communities vulnerable to economic and environmental devastation. In 2012, Congress passed the RESTORE Act containing five funding 'buckets' to allocate anticipated Clean Water Act fines to impacted Gulf Coast states. The Comprehensive Component of the RESTORE Act, aka 'Bucket 2,' is designed to advance the best available large scale environmental projects.

In 2015, BP and its partners in the Macondo offshore well signed a consent decree in which $1.68 billion of Clean Water Act fines contained in the RESTORE Act's Comprehensive Component Bucket 2 was directed by Congress to be allocated to oil spill impacted states for "environmental projects" chosen by a majority of the five Gulf State governors or their representatives and the federal Council chair using these four criteria:
• Projects that are projected to make the greatest contribution to restoring and protecting the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region, without regard to geographic location within the Gulf Coast region. • Large-scale projects and programs that are projected to substantially contribute to restoring and protecting the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast ecosystem. • Projects contained in existing Gulf Coast State comprehensive plans for the restoration and protection natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region.

• Projects that restore long-term resiliency of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands most impacted by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

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Considering inflation's well-known harmful impact on the purchasing power of Deepwater Horizon restoration funds, the Council's current use of a four-year grantmaking cycle should be shortened to two years. While the four-year cycle allows for greater accumulation of BP's annual payments than a two-year cycle would, the advanced stage of restoration permitting and planning within the Gulf States allows for more rapid deployment of Deepwater Horizon funds than was possible at the beginning of the Council's grantmaking. Further, with two annual payments by BP in April 2027 and April 2028, plus the $230 million in Comprehensive Component cash on hand now, more than $414 million would be available to spend in Funding Priorities List 5 by May 2028. That total exceeds the $403 million that the Council approved after four years of fund accumulation last June. In short, the continuation of a four-year grant cycle exposes the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund to diminished positive impact due to inflation. For example, while the Consumer Price Index has risen 43.8% over the last 15 years, the cost for coastal restoration line items including construction materials and fuel has risen by up to 150% over 15 years. In this context, the adoption of a two-year grant cycle would allow for greater purchasing power from the Deepwater Horizon RESTORE Act Comprehensive Component Bucket 2 account at a slightly higher amount than the Council just enacted. The Council's discretionary adoption of a two-year cycle for a Funding Priorities List 5 of the RESTORE Act's Comprehensive Component, instead of a four-year cycle, will abate lost purchasing power of Deepwater Horizon settlement funds due to inflation.

Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact: This resolution in favor of the Council's adoption of a two-year grantmaking cycle allows for a more rapid deployment of RESTORE Act Comprehensive Component funds than the previous Council adopted four-year cycle did and would thereby diminish the remaining Deepwater Horizon restoration funds' exposure to inflation.

Sponsor(s): Jeff R. Branick, Judge, Jefferson County, Texas; Rudy Madrid, Judge, Kleberg County, Texas; John Marez, Commissioner, Nueces County, Texas; Jack Mariano, Commissioner, Pasco County, Fla.

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2026 NACo Resolutions Submitted by Florida Counties & Commissioners
FINANCE, PENSIONS AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Proposed Resolution to Modernize the Capital Gains Tax Exclusion

Issue: Counties urge Congress and the Administration to prioritize policies that unlock existing housing inventory by modernizing the federal Section 121 Capital Gains Tax Exclusion by increasing the cap to reflect modern home values and indexing thresholds to inflation moving forward.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to double the capital gains tax exclusion limits for home sales to $500,000 for single filers and $1,000,000 for joint filers. This is meant to account for 30 years of inflation and to address the "lock-in" effect that has taken hold in the American housing market. To ensure this policy reflects future cost inflation, the exclusion limit should be automatically adjusted for inflation on an annual basis. Moreover, NACo endorses the More Homes on the Market Act (H.R. 1340) and the No Tax on Home Sales Act (H.R. 4327), both of which have received bipartisan support during the 119th Congress. This policy also respects local authority – modernizing the Capital Gains Tax Exclusion is one way the federal government can support local housing goals without preempting local land-use or zoning authority.

Background: Outdated tax laws have created a "lock-in effect" that is freezing the American housing market. Homeowners are being taxed on inflationary gains rather than real investment growth, which disincentivizes them from selling. This lock-in effect is one driver of the national housing shortage, currently estimated at 2 to 3 million homes. The tax hit prevents seniors from downsizing and locks out first time or second time homebuyers.

Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact: Housing is a $48 trillion asset class currently frozen by a “stay-put penalty.” To get the American economy moving, we should end the “inflation tax” that penalizes mobility. Federal action to index capital gains to inflation would provide an immediate jolt to inventory and modernize exclusions for the next generation of homeowners. Every home sale drives immediate demand for local services—realtors, lenders, movers, home inspectors, and contractors. Increased turnover stimulates the local economy far faster than new construction alone.

Sponsor(s): Kathryn Starkey, Commissioner, Pasco County, Fla.

Cross-Claimed: Community, Economic and Workforce Development Policy Steering Committee HEALTH POLICY STEERING COMMITTEE PROPOSED POLICY RESOLUTIONS

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2026 NACo Resolutions Submitted by Florida Counties & Commissioners

HEALTH

Proposed Resolution Urging Congress and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to Rescind or Amend the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services Settings Rule to Remove Barriers to Appropriate Community-Based Housing and Services

Issue: The Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) "Settings Rule" has been applied in a manner that restricts the development and operation of appropriate residential and vocational settings for individuals with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities, limiting individual choice and impeding access to Medicaid-funded services.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), to rescind or substantially amend the HCBS Settings Rule to ensure that federal policy does not unnecessarily restrict community-based service models that are chosen by individuals and their families and that meet legitimate health, safety, and support needs. Consistent with Executive Order 14219, federal agencies should eliminate prescriptive and burdensome regulatory provisions that exceed statutory authority, discourage private and nonprofit development, and impose unnecessary administrative costs on states and local governments. Federal policy should recognize a broad range of community-based settings, including intentional and disability-specific communities, where such settings promote meaningful engagement, personal safety, and quality of life.

Background: Medicaid HCBS waivers are a lifeline for individuals with severe intellectual and developmental disabilities, including adults with profound autism who often require continuous supervision, specialized environments, and consistent supports. While the Settings Rule was intended to promote person-centered planning and community inclusion, its implementation has produced inconsistent interpretations and unintended consequences across states and localities.

Families, providers, and local governments report that the rule has discouraged the development of new residential and vocational options, particularly for individuals with the most complex needs, due to vague standards and expansive administrative discretion. In many cases, settings that foster peer relationships, stability, and engagement are presumed to be isolating based on form rather than function, disregarding individual choice and real-world outcomes. These barriers contribute to long waiting lists, reduced service availability, and increased risk of institutional placement.

Aligning federal policy with Executive Order 14219 provides an opportunity to restore flexibility, encourage innovation, and expand the supply of appropriate settings while maintaining essential civil rights protections.

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Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact: Rescinding or amending the HCBS Settings Rule would reduce administrative burdens, expand service capacity, encourage private investment, and lower long-term public costs by reducing reliance on institutional care. Communities in both urban and rural areas would benefit from increased housing and service options tailored to local needs.

Sponsor(s): Raquel Regalado, Commissioner, Miami-Dade County, Fla.

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2026 NACo Resolutions Submitted by Florida Counties & Commissioners
JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Proposed Resolution for Investing in Safer Communities Through Local Solutions

Issue: Counties are experiencing growing operational and fiscal challenges associated with youth violence, behavioral health needs, substance use, social isolation, community safety concerns and emerging public safety threats. These challenges place increasing demands on county courts, public health agencies, behavioral health programs, schools, corrections systems and law enforcement. Counties need greater access to flexible federal funding, technical assistance and data-driven resources to support locally designed prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery strategies that reflect community-specific needs.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress and federal agencies to prioritize direct county funding, technical assistance and data-sharing partnerships that strengthen local capacity to address youth violence, behavioral health challenges, substance use and emerging public safety threats.

Federal investments should support: • County Courts and Justice Systems - Expanding court capacity and reducing case backlogs; - Supporting veterans, mental health, treatment and diversion courts; - Improving coordination between law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, schools and service providers; - Tracking operational impacts including investigative hours, prosecution costs, detention costs and case outcomes. • Behavioral Health and Youth Services - School-based mental health services; - Trauma-informed care and crisis intervention; - Mentoring programs; - Conflict resolution and restorative practices; - Programs addressing depression, social isolation and substance use among youth and young adults. • Public Health and Community Safety Initiatives - Community violence intervention strategies; - Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs; - County-led prevention initiatives; - Voluntary firearm and ghost gun buy-back and safe disposal programs where authorized by state and local law; - Research, data collection and evaluation of local prevention efforts. - Data Collection and Accountability NACo supports federal partnerships that help counties collect and analyze data necessary to evaluate program effectiveness, including: • Youth participation in prevention programs; • Behavioral health service utilization; • Investigation and prosecution resource demands; • Jail and detention costs; • Community safety outcomes; • Recovery and recidivism indicators.

Federal agencies should share available data and technical assistance with counties and support locally driven evaluation efforts to identify effective practices.

Background: Counties are on the front lines of addressing youth violence, behavioral health challenges, substance use and other emerging threats that affect community safety and economic opportunity. Gun violence alone contributes to more than 46,000 deaths and approximately 96,000 nonfatal injuries annually in the United States, creating

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significant demands on county courts, detention facilities, public health agencies, hospitals, behavioral health programs and law enforcement. Beyond immediate public safety impacts, firearm injuries and exposure to violence contribute to long-term trauma, depression and reduced educational and workforce outcomes, particularly among young people.

Counties collectively invest more than $107 billion annually in justice and public safety services and approximately $163 billion in community health systems. At the same time, communities face growing challenges related to youth mental health, workforce readiness, digital access and social isolation. Local governments are increasingly asked to provide mentoring, conflict resolution, restorative practices, behavioral health services, workforce development pathways and technology access programs that help prevent violence before it occurs. Flexible federal funding directed to county courts, public health agencies, behavioral health programs, schools and community-based initiatives would allow local leaders to strengthen prevention efforts, close opportunity gaps, improve workforce participation, reduce justice system involvement and build safer, healthier and more economically resilient communities.

Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact: Counties of all sizes face growing costs associated with youth violence, behavioral health needs, court operations, detention, public health services, workforce development and community safety initiatives.

Prioritizing direct federal funding and technical assistance for county-led prevention, intervention, workforce development, digital inclusion and behavioral health programs can reduce long-term justice system and healthcare expenditures while improving public safety, economic mobility and community outcomes across urban, suburban and rural counties.

Sponsor(s): Laurie-Anne Sayles, Councilmember At-Large, Montgomery County, Md.; Tim Redmond, Commissioner, Routt County, Colo.; Mary Alford, Commissioner, Alachua County, Fla.; Lynn Canfield, Executive Director, Champaign County Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Boards, Ill.; Ernest Stockton, Director; Justice Policy and Program, Franklin County, Ohio; Michelle Gumz, Board Member, Kane County, Ill.; Janet Thompson, Commissioner, Boone County, Mo.; Theresa Daniel, Commissioner, Dallas County, Texas; Katie Cashion, Commissioner, Guilford County, N.C.

Cross-Claimed: Health Policy Steering Committee PUBLIC LANDS POLICY STEERING COMMITTEE PROPOSED PLATFORM CHANGES

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2026 NACo Resolutions Submitted by Florida Counties & Commissioners

TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

Proposed Resolution In Support Of Federal Action To Establish Responsible Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guardrails That Protect Communities And Support U.S. Innovation

Issue: Counties need federal AI governance that safeguards civil liberties and public safety without overregulating in ways that strain local resources or hinder economic competitiveness.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) calls on Congress and relevant federal agencies to enact a national AI framework that: • Adopts a Risk-Based Regulatory Model: Tailor federal guardrails based on the level of risk posed by AI applications—prioritizing oversight for high-risk domains (e.g., criminal justice, healthcare, social services) and streamlining low-risk uses (e.g., traffic management, code enforcement automation). • Safeguards Civil Rights and Local Accountability: Require transparency, explainability and bias mitigation for AI systems used in public sector decisions. Support public engagement, grievance processes and local opt-out provisions for sensitive applications. • Funds Local Government AI Capacity: Create a dedicated federal grant program for counties to pilot AI tools responsibly, build internal AI literacy and evaluate outcomes, with particular support for rural and underserved jurisdictions. • Promotes Innovation Through Smart Regulation: Align U.S. AI policy with democratic allies to develop shared global standards. Simplify regulatory pathways for AI startups that demonstrate transparency, data accountability, and responsible model development, such as avoiding discriminatory outcomes or opaque decision-making, while preserving strong federal protections for privacy, civil rights, and fairness. • Mandates Transparency in Federal AI Tools Deployed Locally: Require all federally funded or contracted AI tools used by local governments to disclose training data sources, known limitations and accuracy metrics, and to allow independent third-party auditing.

• Invests in Workforce Transition and Education: Support counties and regional workforce boards in preparing residents for AI-disrupted labor markets through upskilling, reskilling and partnerships with community colleges and employers. • Establishes Baseline National Data Privacy Standards: Develop federal data protection legislation that governs the use of personal and sensitive data in AI systems, particularly those operating in local governance contexts.

Background: Counties are uniquely positioned at the intersection of public service delivery and emerging technologies, and are increasingly integrating artificial intelligence into functions like traffic management, emergency response, permitting, public health and justice administration. However, without clear, consistent federal guardrails, counties face significant legal, ethical and operational uncertainty. Local governments often lack the technical capacity to evaluate AI systems for bias, reliability or security—yet they are ultimately accountable to the public when these systems fail or cause harm.

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Counties have a strong interest in ensuring that AI is deployed responsibly and equitably, without compromising civil liberties or public trust. At the same time, they rely on a healthy innovation ecosystem—including private-sector partners and technology vendors—to modernize services and control costs. NACo therefore supports federal policies that promote transparency, risk-based oversight and investment in local AI capacity, while avoiding overregulation that would limit innovation or disadvantage U.S.-based firms.

Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact: This resolution calls for federal legislative and regulatory action to ensure AI systems benefit residents and communities equitably, while also providing local governments with the tools and funding to innovate responsibly.

Sponsor(s): Gregg Weiss, Commissioner, Palm Beach County, Fla.

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2026 NACo Resolutions Submitted by Florida Counties & Commissioners
TRANSPORTATION

Proposed Resolution Urging Congress to Strengthen Federal Protections for Rail Corridors and Prioritize Rail Infrastructure Activation

Issue: Rail infrastructure is a longstanding federal priority critical to national commerce, supply chain resilience, and regional economic connectivity. Nevertheless, inactive or underutilized rail corridors are being permanently converted to non-rail uses at an increasing rate, which can impede future rail activation and limit long-term economic opportunities for the communities that those corridors were designed to serve.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to reinforce and clarify federal policy prioritizing the preservation and activation of rail corridors, consistent with federal and state recognition of rail as essential infrastructure supporting interstate commerce and economic development. Specifically, Congress should strengthen federal protections to ensure that inactive, underutilized or dormant rail lines remain preserved for future rail use and are not permanently converted to incompatible non-rail uses, such as parks or recreational trails, in a manner that precludes reactivation.

NACo further urges Congress to promote outreach in directly impacted communities to demonstrate that rail activation creates local benefits, including economic development, job creation, freight mobility, and reduced roadway congestion. This initiative would highlight that impacted communities directly experience the benefits of rail connectivity, alongside broader regional and national economic gains.

Background: Rail infrastructure plays a vital role in the movement of goods and materials, while at the same time supporting local economies, reducing pressure on road networks, and enhancing regional competitiveness. While the economic benefits of freight rail often extend across regions and states, the physical presence of rail corridors is experienced locally, leading communities and local governments to prioritize short-term land-use preferences or immediate quality-of-life considerations when rail lines are inactive.

Local governments serve an essential role in representing neighborhood interests and responding to constituent concerns; however, when inactive rail corridors are permanently repurposed for nonrail uses, future opportunities for rail activation may be foreclosed, limiting long-term economic growth, supply chain resilience, and connectivity for the very communities these decisions are intended to serve. The absence of clear federal protections for rail infrastructure can result in incremental land-use decisions that undermine national and state transportation priorities without providing durable economic alternatives. Strengthening federal policy to preserve rail corridors for future activation, while encouraging thoughtful integration of rail infrastructure with surrounding communities, would allow local residents to benefit directly from increased employment

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opportunities, industrial development, and improved access to regional and national markets. Such an approach respects local concerns while ensuring that critical infrastructure assets remain available to meet future transportation and economic needs.

Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact: Preserving and activating rail corridors would support economic development, job creation, and freight efficiency in both urban and rural communities, while reducing long-term infrastructure costs associated with roadway congestion and freight-related wear on local roads. Clear federal prioritization of rail preservation would provide certainty to local governments and private stakeholders, and help ensure that rail investments deliver direct and lasting economic benefits to the communities they serve.

Sponsor(s): Raquel Regalado, Commissioner, Miami-Dade County, Fla.

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