

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, April 20, 2017

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**Harris County Housing Authority Announces New Chairman;
Vice Chairman of Board of Commissioners**

HOUSTON, TX - April 20, 2017 – Harris County Housing Authority (HCHA) announced yesterday that Gerald Womack has been elected as Chairman of the Board of Commissioners. He replaces Kerry Wright, who announced at the March 2017 Board meeting that he would be stepping down but would continue to serve on the board. HCHA also announced the appointment of Roberto Gonzalez as Vice Chairman of the Board of Commissioners to replace Womack.

Womack and Gonzalez will continue to serve on the Board with Commissioners Wright, Joe Ellis, and Joe Villarreal. A formal ceremony for the Board’s new appointments will take place at the next Board meeting on May 17, 2017.

“I’m very excited... I’m really charged up to work with the Authority and the staff at this capacity to make sure that all Harris County residents have access to the variety of services that we provide,” Womack said. “This is a very trying time for housing in general and so I’m happy to be working with my fellow Commissioners, to be able to continue to carry out the mission of HCHA and take us to even higher heights.”

Womack was appointed to the Board in March 2012 by the late Harris County Commissioner, El Franco Lee and was recently reappointed by Rodney Ellis, new Precinct 1 County Commissioner. He is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Womack Development & Investment which serves the Houston and surrounding communities through its full-service commercial and residential brokerage firm. Womack’s work is dedicated to improving the quality of life for inner-city neighborhood residents by focusing on community development, revitalization, and economic development.

Womack is a member of Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner’s Transition Team and currently serves on the boards of HoustonFirst, Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and is a member of the Houston Association of Realtors. He is also the immediate past president of the Houston Black Real Estate Association. Womack has also received the honors of being named a 2014 D-MARS Top 50 Black Professionals & Entrepreneurs, a 2013 Texas Southern University Legends & Leaders Business Trendsetter, and a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

Newly-elected Vice Chairman Gonzalez was appointed to the Board in May 2013 by Harris County Commissioner, Jack Morman. Gonzalez is the Executive Vice President of Employment and Training Centers, Inc., a staffing company he co-owns with his wife, Irma Diaz-Gonzalez along with having other business interests.

Gonzalez is a 39-year veteran of federal, state and locally funded government programs which includes his work as an Employment and Training Planner for the Houston Galveston-Area Council of Governments and a Research and Project Officer for the U.S. Department of Labor.

Gonzalez serves on the boards of the University of St. Thomas School of Education, the University of Houston Dean’s Advisory Board for the School of Education, and the Houston A+ Challenge (Annenberg Foundation). He is on the Lamar High School’s Shared Decision Making Project Advisory Committee and is chairman of the Capital Campaign of the School of Education for the University of Houston.

“This is an important board with a tremendous assignment,” Gonzalez said. “Unfortunately, there are even more challenging times ahead as we fight both current shortfalls in affordable housing funding and the increasing needs amongst families, seniors, veterans and the disabled, while political opposition is at an all time high. I look forward to the challenge and am confident that we will continue to discover ways to serve those most in need,” Gonzalez said.

Wright, who stepped down from his role after serving his fourth year as Chairman of the Board, said it has been an honor to lead the Authority. Appointed on August 15, 2012 by Harris County Judge Ed Emmett, Wright was actively involved in breaking ground on the Retreat at Westlock development, helping HCHA achieve a balanced budget, supporting HCHA's efforts to reduce operating expenses, and assisting with turnaround efforts for a formerly-troubled housing agency. Wright decided to step down from the role to dedicate more time to his business, but is looking forward to supporting the efforts of the Board's new leadership.

"My dream has always been to change the climate of HCHA," Wright said. "I've been pleased to see that dream slowly come to reality. HCHA has become a great organization from a staff and leadership perspective and I am proud to represent it."

Horace Allison, HCHA's Chief Executive Officer, thanked outgoing Chairman Wright for his strong guidance and involvement over the past five years.

"We appreciate [Wright's] passion and knowledgeable, hands-on leadership which has successfully guided us through many storms and has brought us to a place of calmness where we once faced critical challenges within," Allison said. "Our Commissioners work very well together. Womack and Gonzalez are excellent choices for passing the torch and leading the way as we continue to further our mission during these trying times."

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About Harris County Housing Authority

For over 40 years, Harris County Housing Authority (HCHA) has offered desirable, livable, and sustainable communities for low-income residents including families with school-aged children, seniors, veterans, and persons with disabilities. HCHA is the general partner of eight affordable housing developments and administers more than 4,500 Housing Choice Vouchers. HCHA is committed to helping low-income residents in the unincorporated areas of Harris County achieve self-sufficiency and economic independence through housing services, which include affordable housing, a homeownership program, the Moderate Rehabilitation Program, the Amy Young Barrier Removal Program, Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers, a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, and the Single Room Occupancy program. Learn more at www.hchatexas.org and on Facebook, or follow us on Twitter, @hchaTexas.