



## Gov. Christie dissolves Council on Affordable Housing

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EPA/NOAH K. MURRAY / POOL New Jersey Gov.

Chris Christie speaks to the families of victims of 9/11 with his wife, Mary Pat, during 10th anniversary ceremonies at the site of the World Trade Center. The Christie administration has officially dissolved the Council on Affordable Housing.

**TRENTON** — The Christie Administration has officially dissolved the often-criticized Council on Affordable Housing, giving the state Department of Community Affairs responsibility to ensure poor residents have access to housing.

A 12-member board, COAH was responsible for implementing the state's Fair Housing Act, but was lambasted by both Democrats and Republicans for being overly bureaucratic and enforcing outdated rules. Legislation abolishing COAH made it to the governor's desk earlier this year, but he conditionally vetoed it based on other aspects of the bill.

Christie instead issued a plan to abolish the council in June, giving legislators 60 days to block it.

Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Lori Grifa said the reorganization will allow decisions to be made locally, and end the "bureaucratic log-jam and frustration."

"The goal of this reorganization plan is to put an end to this hopelessly complex and outdated system – and provide affordable housing opportunities to our most deserving residents," Grifa said in a prepared statement.

But advocates for low and moderate income residents said the reorganization opens the door to towns excluding poorer residents and called it a power grab by Christie.

“The only thing worse than a dysfunctional COAH is Chris Christie running the show,” said Kevin Walsh, of the Fair Share Housing Center. “He’s going to take it so far in the direction of towns doing whatever they want.”

Walsh said his organization is challenging the reorganization in state appellate court.