



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 30, 2011

## Fed Govt Makes Race an Issue in Calif. Community

According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the affluent Bay Area county across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco has a major problem. It is too white. Using data from the most recent census, HUD has determined that Marin County includes seven of the 10 whitest cities in the Bay Area. The Bay Citizen reports on the draft of the report released by HUD:



The draft report, released Wednesday, came in response to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's determination that Marin County had "failed to comply" with the 1964 Civil Rights Act and two other anti-discrimination statutes.

Marin County's Community Development Agency is actually attempting to address the concerns raised by HUD by recommending zoning regulations to reduce the construction of new apartments and laws requiring the development of low income housing. Additionally, the agency is recommending programs that would combat discrimination by landlords and realtors.

Still, Chuck Hauptman, HUD's Regional Director for Fair Housing, is unsure if these measures are significant enough, asserting that they will review the plans to see if it is acceptable as far as content goes.

Not all Marin County residents are thrilled with the proposals. Julane Chapman, for example, contends that while the community could do with some affordable housing, "there's not a lot of room to build it. We can't build in the open space."

Local businessman Marty Brenner views the idea of imposing diversity on the community as downright silly. "It started out as a white vacation area so most of the people around here are white," he explains.

"We need affordable housing, but there's not a lot of room to build it," said Julane Chapman, a retired therapist who was getting her hair done. "We can't build in the open space," she said.

Source: [The Bay Citizen \(http://s.tt/129Ff\)](http://s.tt/129Ff)

Marin County officials have been doing their best to reach out to minorities, according to a [video report](#) from KPIX. The video captures one of the few non-whites in the county, Barbara Westerhoff, who appears visibly confused by any implications that the community is racially insensitive. She asserts that she never had a problem with any of the Marin County residents. I walk down the street, people say good morning to me. I feel so fortunate, said Westerhoff.

However, the video also shows African-American resident Nancy Reed complaining of the lack of diversity in the community:

When I pick up my grandson or take him to school, I see maybe four Latino children there and one



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African-American two, including my grandson. Thatssomethings wrong. Why isnt [Marin County] doing more? Now they have to be forced to do more.

The federal government's actions in Marin County are [reminiscent](#) of those taken by the Department of Justice in response to so-called discriminatory practices of local police departments which are turning out fewer minority recruits. In cities such as Dayton, Ohio, which shows a minute number of black applicants and an even smaller percentage of those black applicants passing the police exam, the Department of Justice has made a reputation for itself as one that forces diversity through litigation. Since 1990 the DOJ has filed 24 discrimination lawsuits against cities to compel them to change what it considers questionable hiring practices.

Marin County, was has long had a reputation for upscale liberalism, achieved fame, of sorts, after being parodied in the 1977 satirical novel, [The Serial: A Year in the Life of Marin County](#), which was later made into a movie called *Serial*, starring Martin Mull and Tuesday Weld.



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