Members understand all too well his decision to spend well-earned time with his family, but we selfishly regret his decision. I know I speak for all who have ever worked with Mal in saying it has been an honor and a pleasure working with him. I would urge him to get at least a good week or two of rest and relaxation, because I know many of us in Congress will still be relying on his continued advice and input. Mal, we wish you and your family the best in retirement and continued success in the future.

TRIBUTE TO THE ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN IN SCIENCE

HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 30, 1996

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the Association of Women in Science [AWIS] which is celebrating its 25th year of service and commitment to young girls and women in science. AWIS is the largest multidisciplinary science organization for women in the United States. Founded in 1971, AWIS is a nonprofit organization committed to the achievement of equity and full participation for women in all areas of science and technology. Serving as a national voice, AWIS has made a lasting impact on the accessibility of science education and scientific careers to women.

During this special year, AWIS plans to focus its efforts on the continuation and expansion of its programs that promote educational and career opportunities for women in the sciences and engineering. Two current projects include: The Association for Women in Science Mentoring Project and Women Scientists in Academia: Warming up a Chilly Climate. The mentoring project, funded by the National Science Foundation, is a community-based program at 12 locations throughout the country that attempts to foster cooperation between local representatives of scientific organizations, and undergraduate and graduate students. The Women Scientists in Academia project is funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and focuses on improving college and university environments for the advancement of women in science.

Equality of opportunity for all Americans, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion or physical ability, is the cornerstone of our democracy. We must afford all of our citizens access to science education and science careers without discrimination or other barriers. Our advancement and competitiveness in the global marketplace depends upon it.

Mr. Speaker, it is a proud moment for me to recognize the ground-breaking achievements of AWIS and express appreciation to this outstanding organization for their continuing work toward equity for all women in science and technology.

HOUSING ACT AMENDMENT JEOPARDIZES HOMELESS ASSISTANCE USE OF FEDERAL PROPERTY

HON. CARDISS COLLINS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 30, 1996

Mrs. COLLINS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express deep concern over a provision that first appeared in the manager's amendment to H.R. 2406, the U.S. Housing Act of 1996. This legislation passed the House on May 9, 1996. The provision, which is section 506, would seriously jeopardize an important form of assistance to the homeless provided by the title V of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. Under that title, providers of homeless assistance have a priority in obtaining Federal surplus real property for such use.

The language of section 506 was not the subject of any committee hearings. It was not the subject of prior consultation with the Government Reform and Oversight Committee, the jurisdictional committee for such a matter. It was not the subject of advance discussions either with the General Services Administration or with the Department of Health and Human Services. Each of these agencies has specific responsibilities with respect to the implementation of title V.

Mr. Speaker, during the 101st Congress, I chaired a subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations and was a principal author of title V. I know the importance of the work being done by dozens of homeless representatives throughout the country that have obtained use of Federal surplus real property. These properties are helping the providers bring shelter, food, job training, and job search assistance to thousands of homeless men, women, and children.

My concern is that section 506 seems to reflect insensitivity or indifference not only toward the homeless but toward the sacrifices and achievements of numerous provider groups, private and public, that have used and will use title V to serve our less fortunate sisters and brothers. I would note that the same might be said about one of mandatory policy assumptions of the Fiscal Year 1997 Budget Resolution, namely, that title V be repealed.

Let us look at some of the things section 506 does. It gives GSA discretionary authority to disregard title V and transfer surplus real property to a nonprofit organization for homeless shelters, or, and I emphasize that ''or'', for occupancy or construction by low-income individuals and families. Any such transfer, however, must be concurred in by the appropriate local governmental authorities. Yet once GSA makes a transfer of a portion of the property that is significant as the section defines ''significant'', transfers of that portion and all other portions of the property will be deemed to be in compliance with title V. This is so, no matter how great the overall size or value of the property is. The term ''significant'' is defined in terms of a finite size or value or a given fraction of overall size or value.

In using a fractional value criterion, GSA would be in the position of having to appraise the entire property and then make the figure known. The reason is that GSA, in cooperation with the local authorities, would need to predetermine and then announce to potential nonprofit organizations what portion or portions of the property could be viewed as significant and available for a section 506 transfer. This would create a problem. Any such revelation would prejudice GSA's ability to get top dollar in disposing of other portions of the property by negotiated or public sale.

Under section 506, a qualified nonprofit organization is one that exists chiefly to provide housing or housing assistance either for the homeless or, and I again emphasize that ''or'', for low-income individuals or families. Housing for low-income persons is certainly a worthy purpose. Under section 506, however, GSA and the local authorities would have the option of using that purpose to displace homeless assistance in the forms for which title V provides, such as shelters.

Section 506 gives GSA broad authority, which includes issuance of implementing regulations. GSA would undoubtedly choose to issue such regulations. Logically, the regulations would provide for some kind of suspension or delay of the existing title V screening or application process. Otherwise, groups wishing to take advantage of the section 506 authority would not have an effective opportunity to do so. It is likely that GSA and the local authorities more often than not would end up concluding a section 506 transfer arrangement. Impelling them would be a mutual desire to avoid involvement with title V processes. Meanwhile, of course, other homeless assistance representatives would be discouraged from planning or acting with respect to any portion of the property.

Mr. Speaker, no case has been made that the title V priority for homeless use should be set aside in this manner or that surplus property use for low-income housing should become for GSA and the local authorities an alternative to meeting basic homeless assistance needs.

Moreover, the language of 506 is full of surprises and ambiguities. Instances of imprecision or omission are quite numerous. It is simply not clear how the language would operate or whether it could operate at all. Here are some of these deficiencies:

First. Section 506 involves only GSA. It gives authority to no other Federal agency. Yet it would impose on GSA strange new functions, including the evaluation of a homeless assistance plan, a low-income housing project, and a qualified nonprofit organization. In contrast to section 506, existing surplus property transfer programs require GSA to rely on the review and approval of the Departments of Interior, Health and Human Services, Education, Transportation, or Justice, depending on whether the property is to be used for recreation, historic monuments, public health (including homeless assistance), education, public airports, or correctional facilities.

Second. There is nothing said in section 506 about the mode of disposal, that is, whether it should be by gift, public benefit discount conveyance, lease, or sale.

Third. There is nothing in section 506 about terms and conditions of transfer, about restricting future use of the property, about its resale, or about compliance action and reversion in the event of nonuse or default.

Fourth. The section authorizes transfers only to nonprofit organizations irrespective of their tax-exempt status. Most title V applicants are required to have such status. In addition the section fails to include as possible transferees local public bodies, such as public