

when developers sell unimproved lots, and using sales contracts, retain title until the debt on the property is fully paid. They often do not have adequate water and sewage access.

These conditions create a serious public health, safety, and environmental risk to the border regions. Perhaps more importantly, they represent third-world conditions in the United States. I believe, and the Secretary of HUD agrees, that we must make the eradication of such conditions within the United States a national priority.

It is my hope that my colleagues will accept this amendment, addressing the problems of the colonias has been a national priority, and I believe that it should remain one.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I know that this amendment is supported by Senators on this side, the Senator from New Mexico and the junior Senator from Texas. We are making inquiry to determine whether they wish to speak on this amendment.

Mrs. HUTCHISON addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I wish to add my statement in support of Senator BINGAMAN's amendment of which I am a cosponsor. I do appreciate this 10 percent set-aside for the colonias. Colonias are places that we did not know existed in America. You would not believe it. I have walked in a colonia. They are places that people live that do not have good water, and they do not have sanitary systems or sewage treatment. They are terrible.

What we are we doing with this amendment is to say that it is a priority for our country to clear those places up so that every American has the ability to live in sanitary, basically clean conditions. I support the amendment. I appreciate Senator BOND taking this amendment for us to make sure that we serve the people in need.

The issue of designating a portion of border States' CDBG money for housing is one of giving proper recognition and emphasis to the development needs of severely distressed, rural and mostly unincorporated settlements located along the United States-Mexico border. Colonias are located within 150 miles of the Mexican border, in the States of Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas.

Texas has the longest border with Mexico of any state.

In 1993, Texas reported the existence of 1,193 colonias with an estimated population of 279,963 people. In 1994, New Mexico reported 34 colonias, with a population of 28,000 residents.

Senator BINGAMAN and I believe it important to formally recognize the scale of this challenge.

For fiscal year 1995, VA, HUD appropriations report language specified 10

percent of the State's share of CDBG money for housing in colonias. The conference report did not specify, "colonias," but instead, folded that commitment into \$400 million for a number of new initiatives.

That money came under a sunset provision. It requires new action to continue the formal commitment from us at the Federal level.

This does not involve any new or additional funds.

It is merely a statement of urgent priority that these funds be available for housing in the colonias upon application.

This money only comes from the border States' shares. It does not impinge on any other States or their resources.

Mr. President, I urge we reaffirm that commitment to the people of the colonias that they are truly a part of American society and America's priorities.

I urge my colleagues to support the Bingaman-Hutchison amendment.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I suggest we proceed to a vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the amendment? If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2791) was agreed to.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote by which the amendment was agreed to.

Mr. BINGAMAN. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. DOLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

VISIT TO THE SENATE BY MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I am honored to have the opportunity to welcome, on behalf of the entire Senate, a distinguished delegation from the European Parliament here for the 43d European Parliament and U.S. Congress interparliamentary meeting.

Led by Mr. Alan Donnelly from the United Kingdom and Ms. Karla Peijs of the Netherlands, the 18-member delegation is here to meet with Members of Congress and other American officials to discuss matters of mutual concern.

No doubt about it, the European Parliament plays a pivotal role in shaping the new Europe of the 21st century. There are many challenges ahead—assisting the new democracies as they build free-market economies and defining relations with Russia, among them. Continued contact and good relations between the European Parliament and the U.S. Congress are essential in developing better economic ties with Europe and in reinforcing our common goals.

I ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming our distinguished guests from the European Parliament.

[Applause.]

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a list of the delegation be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the list was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Mr. Alan Donnelly, Chairman, Party of the European Socialists, United Kingdom.

Ms. Karla Peijs, Vice Chairman, European People's Party, Netherlands.

Mr. Javier Areatio Toledo, European People's Party, Spain.

Ms. Mary Banotti, European People's Party, Ireland.

Mr. Laurens Jan Brinkhorst, European Liberal Democratic and Reformist Party, Netherlands.

Mr. Bryan Cassidy, European People's Party, United Kingdom.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Cot, Party of European Socialists, France.

Mr. Gerfrid Gaigg, European People's Party, Austria.

Ms. Iiona Graenitz, Party of European Socialists, Austria.

Ms. Inga-Britt Johansson, Party of European Socialists, Sweden.

Mr. Mark Killilea, Union for Europe Group, Ireland.

Ms. Irimi Lambraki, Party of European Socialists, Greece.

Mr. Franco Malerba, Union for Europe Group, Italy.

Ms. Bernie Malone, Party of European Socialists, Ireland.

Mr. Gerhard Schmid, Party of European Socialists, Germany.

Mr. Josep Verde I Aldea, Party of European Socialists, Spain.

To be determined, European People's Party.

SECRETARIAT, INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Dr. Manfred Michel, Director-General for External Relations.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION DELEGATION

Mr. Jim Currie, Charge d'Affaires, European Commission.

Mr. Bob Whiteman, Head of Congressional Affairs, EC Delegation.

RECESS

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess so that we may personally greet Members of the European Parliament.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 1:40 p.m., recessed until 1:44 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. SANTORUM).

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending committee amendments be set aside.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.