

at the polls. Under this bill, if a poll worker in California, Florida, Illinois, New York or Texas chooses to challenge the eligibility of a person coming to vote, that poll watcher can do so. Conveniently, these are the states where the majority of our nation's Hispanics live. This is the United States of America. When a person comes to vote, they should not be expected to jump through hoops, clear hurdles or be hindered in any other way. And the Immigration and Naturalization Service should not have to confirm for a poll watcher that a citizen wishing to vote is actually a citizen.

There's always a good reason why anyone does something. And then there's the real reason. This is a Republican ploy to keep certain constituencies from the ballot box. This bill is a dressed up 90's version of the poll tax—designed to clearly intimidate Hispanics and other minorities into staying away from the polls—and it betrays the Privacy Act and the Voting Rights Act.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote against this bill for many reasons. First, it would shut the door to voting rights of any person a poll worker chooses to challenge. Second, raising the annual contribution limit for individuals from \$25,000 to \$75,000 looks to me like a sweetheart deal the Republicans are making with their wealthy donors. Third, it would require labor unions to get written consent from their members before the unions can spend union dues money on political activities. This is one more back door effort by the Republicans to bust the unions. I urge my colleagues to vote against HR 3485, and against the upcoming bill entitled "Paycheck Protection Act," which is a union-busting bill.

These bills do nothing to truly reform our campaign finance system.

IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE  
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 247

**HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 1, 1998*

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 247. This bill, in a small way, recognizes what the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. has contributed to the civil society of the United States and to the world. In a sense, this bill outlines what we owe to Dr. Martin Luther King for the lessons he taught us on how to change our world and how to bring about justice. Dr. King's life and his work are a powerful example to all people who care about freedom, justice and equality.

Dr. Martin Luther King loved this country. Dr. King's America was not perfect, but he envisioned a day when it would be perfect. The America he lived in was not perfectly just, but he saw a day when Justice would be given to all. Not everyone in Dr. King's America was free, but in his mighty and prophetic dream, he saw a day when Freedom would ring from every mountaintop and on that day—as he promised—"all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

Dr. King loved this country because he believed in its promise to all people who make

it their home. Dr. King was a man of faith who believed that Our Creator has endowed us with certain and unalienable rights to life, to liberty, and to the pursuit of happiness. It is a sad fact in our nation's history that these unalienable rights were not always recognized and not always freely granted. Dr. King was like a prophet of old crying in the wilderness. His message was simple: Justice and Freedom are worth fighting for.

But the battles he called us to were not to be fought in the streets with armed struggle and violence. The war that Dr. King waged was not for military dominance or political power, but for the hearts and minds of all who would hear his message. He called on Americans to rise above selfishness and personal ambition, to rise above anger and hate, and to establish Justice and Freedom through non-violent political action and change. His tactics in this war were founded on his deep conviction that morally there was right and there was wrong. It was immoral to segregate people by race and to hate someone because they have a different color skin. It was immoral to oppress other people. It was immoral to financially support institutions that participate in subjugating others.

Mr. Speaker, these things are still immoral. There are still rights that need to be wronged. There are still people living in this world who are oppressed and who are not free. We need look no farther than 90 miles off our shore to see a country where a tyrant rules and the call to freedom is quickly and brutally silenced.

Mr. Speaker, this bill calls on Americans to celebrate the life of Dr. King. This call to celebrate Dr. King's life and contributions comes 30 years after he was gunned down in Memphis, Tennessee. Thirty years go, Dr. King was in Memphis supporting the striking city's sanitation workers exercise of their right to assemble, their right to free speech, their right to determine their own destiny, their basic right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

On April 3rd, 1968, thirty years ago this week, Dr. King stood in the Bishop Charles Mason Temple and called on all within earshot to stand together with greater determination. He called on all to move together through the days of challenge to make America what it ought to be. As if he had foreseen his own death the next day, he called for perseverance and patience in the face of opposition. And he left us with hope. Hope that his dream of an America where Freedom rings and Justice is established throughout the land would one day be at hand.

There is work yet to be done. We should all stand together through the days of challenge because America—while great among all nations of the world and history—has greater days to come.

Mr. Speaker, I have joined with my colleagues to sponsor this bill because I deeply believe that all peoples living under tyranny and oppression must be able to make their voices heard. I too have a dream that all peoples one day must live in a just, equal, and free world. I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill and to call on the people of the United States to study, reflect on, and celebrate Dr. King's life and ideals in order to fulfill his dream of civil and human rights for all people.

SENIOR CITIZEN HOUSING—ANOTHER CONTRACT RENEWAL DILEMMA: "SENIOR CITIZENS HOUSING FINANCIAL RESTRUCTURING ACT OF 1998"

**HON. RICK LAZIO**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 1, 1998*

Mr. LAZIO of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Senior Citizens Housing Financial Restructuring Act of 1998. As my colleagues will recall, over the last three years the Congress has been dealing with the section 8 project-based renewal issue pertaining to the FHA multifamily inventory. Last year, the so-called mark to market legislation was enacted to deal with this inventory. However, that legislation did not address the Section 202 housing for the elderly inventory.

The section 202 loan portfolio consists of over 4,500 direct government loans to private nonprofit sponsors for developing rental housing for lower income elderly. Projects developed under this program benefit from 40-year direct loans and 20-year section 8 rental assistance contracts. These projects contain approximately 215,000<sup>1</sup> units, for which funds were reserved from 1976 through 1988. Between 2001 and 2015, virtually all of the section 8 rental contracts for these projects will expire. Projects funded subsequent to 1988 were either funded under the new Capital Advance Program or converted from direct loans to capital advances.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Speaker, preservation of this inventory is of paramount concern to me as well as all my colleagues since there is considerable demand for the units and few alternatives for many lower income elderly. Like the FHA multifamily portfolio, a primary issue facing this housing program is the need for renewals of section 8 contracts. Current HUD policy allows annual renewals only. In 2001, approximately 300 projects will come due for renewal. The number will climb each year until it reaches 4,500 projects in 2013. The estimated annual cost of renewals is approximately \$250 million in 2001 and \$2.9 billion in 2021.

As elderly housing becomes more market-oriented and residents age, the older section 202 projects must meet the cost of (1) service coordination, (2) structural retrofitting, and (3) other improvements required to serve more service-dependent residents in the future. However, in the current budgetary environment, Congress will have difficulty meeting these costs under section 8.

My legislation allows that elderly housing operating under earlier versions of section 202 should be allowed to convert to the new, improved form of elderly housing assistance.

<sup>1</sup> Since the program was created in section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959, the program has assisted not-for-profit sponsors, dedicated to serving the special needs of the elderly, in building 337,000 residential rental units—a major portion of the nation's supply of quality, affordable housing for the elderly.

<sup>2</sup> Since 1990, the revised section 202 program provides (1) a capital advance to finance construction and (2) periodic operating subsidies to fill the gap between the cost of elderly housing and rent revenues that low-income residents can afford. The capital advance is, in effect, an interest-free loan on which no payments are due as long as the housing meets program requirements. Operating support goes to elderly housing through a "project rental assistance contract" (PRAC), renewable in five year increments.