

Over the past few years, under the leadership of Chairman BAKER, the Financial Services Capital Markets Subcommittee has spent considerable time examining the potential of an "implied" government guarantee of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. I am concerned, because H.R. 3206, as introduced, would expand the express government backing of Ginnie Mae into the conventional home loan market. This could place American Taxpayers at a greater risk of assuming more default risk for home mortgages.

Our housing finance system is the model of the world. Combining the conventional mortgage market, the government market of FHA and VA, and the jumbo market, the national homeownership rate is close to 68%. The housing sector is the bulwark of the economy and I am very willing to consider good public policy to help more Americans achieve the dream of home ownership. I worry, however, that H.R. 3206 is an unnecessary expansion of a federal government guarantee that inappropriately puts American Taxpayers at risk.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER
AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT
ON H.R. 2620, DEPARTMENTS OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING
AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT,
AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

SPEECH OF

HON. TIM ROEMER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 8, 2001

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in opposition to the VA-HUD bill. My frustrations concerning NASA's international space station and its ongoing budget woes have been echoed by the independent Management and Cost Evaluation Task Force. This panel recently reported to Congress that the space station is faced with crippling cost overruns.

Congress almost got it right in 1993 when the space station survived by just one single vote. We recognized then that NASA could not afford the station. In the years that followed, this behemoth has squeezed the budgets of the so-called "smaller, faster, cheaper" missions. Not since the Hubble Space Telescope repair and the Mars Pathfinder missions has the American public been rewarded by the fantastic discoveries offered by our space program.

Now the independent task force has told us that overall management of the whole program and its total costs has been inadequate. As a result of budget overruns and schedule delays, NASA must reorganize the entire space station program, redefine the scientific objectives and drastically cut spending to keep the current three-person crew financially feasible. The panel further reported that plans to complete the basic U.S. part of the station over the next 5 years with the \$8.3 billion allotted to the program are not credible.

No one has a good estimate of how much the space station will cost. GAO estimated years ago that it would cost American taxpayers more than \$100 billion to build and operate over its lifetime. Now it is clear that there will be no worthwhile scientific research to show for it. The station's eight original sci-

entific research objectives are gone along with the crew return vehicle, which might have allowed an adequate number of crew members to conduct research.

Regardless, the station is now limited to a crew of only three—the number of astronauts that can fit inside a Russian Soyuz re-entry vehicle. That is why Europe, Japan, Canada and other international partners will not be able to conduct research. Instead, they will spend their time simply preserving and keeping in orbit a behemoth that can't afford the manpower to yield any new meaningful science.

I am also concerned that this bill comes up short on critically important housing programs that serve this country's most vulnerable citizens and families. Many accounts within the Department of Housing and Urban Development are simply zeroed out under this legislation. For example, the Public Housing Drug Elimination Grant program has been eliminated. Funding for empowerment zones is cut by 78 percent, public housing modernization by 5 percent, and community development block grants by 2 percent.

Mr. Speaker, additional cuts to distressed public housing revitalization and fair housing and equal opportunity activities will not help alleviate the shortage of adequate housing in America's inner cities and rural areas. I cannot support efforts to cut off poor and rural families from finding decent housing in these areas.

CONGRATULATING WILLIAM
MCFARLANE

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 13, 2001

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor William (Bill) McFarlane for receiving the 2000 Agriculturist of the Year Award. The award is given by the Greater Fresno Area Chamber of Commerce to an individual who exemplifies leadership and integrity in California's Central Valley agricultural business community.

Bill McFarlane is a native of Fresno. He grew up on a small farm near Clovis. In 1948, McFarlane and his father formed a farming partnership and expanded their farming operations. His family currently continues to operate the farm, which has about 1,000 acres of almonds, oranges, and wheat. McFarlane and McFarlane also own a farm in Butte County on which rice is the principal crop. Their family farming operations was active for 25 years in western Fresno County, producing almonds, tomatoes, cotton, garlic, melons, and lettuce.

Bill is currently a member of the Advisory Committee for the Clovis Unified School District's Reagan Educational Center Agriculture Department. He also serves on the Friends of Agriculture Extension for the University of California Cooperative Extension. He is a past chairman of Blue Diamond Growers and a previous president of the Central California Almond Growers Association.

McFarlane is a past recipient of the Special Recognition Award from the Fresno County Farm Bureau and the Co-op Farmer of the Year from the Agricultural Council of California.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate William McFarlane on his 2000 Agriculturist of the Year Award. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mr. McFarlane and wishing him many more years of continued success.

COMMENDING VETERANS OF
SUSSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

HON. MARGE ROUKEMA

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 13, 2001

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the outstanding veterans we are so fortunate to have in our community in Sussex County, New Jersey. On Saturday, November 10, 2001, a County Salute to all Military Veterans from Sussex County will be held at the Sussex County Fairgrounds. On this day, we will honor the veterans of Sussex County and celebrate the spirit of those who have fought so bravely to preserve our tradition of democracy.

As Veterans' Day approaches, the eyes of the nation turn to the service and sacrifice of those who serve. As a nation, we owe these men and women our gratitude. I believe that the government has made solemn promises to its citizens who served in the armed forces that must be kept! I believe that Congress must make sure that this promise is not broken. By ensuring that we maintain a system of reliable, effective and compassionate benefits, this nation both keeps its promise and honors veterans.

In my 22 years in the House of Representatives, I have kept in close contact with our veterans of New Jersey. And I have learned that none of the legislation we pass in Congress can provide real assistance to veterans if our veterans do not know these benefits exist.

That is precisely why I have cosponsored the Veterans Right to Know Act. This bill requires the Veterans Administration (VA) to inform veterans about eligibility for benefits and health care services whenever a veterans first applies for any benefits. In my conversations with veterans and veterans' leaders, this legislation is a top priority.

In addition to this bill, the Congress has taken important steps in keeping our promise to veterans. This June, the President signed into law our Veterans' Survivor Benefits Improvement Act. I co-sponsored this bill which created new life insurance and health care benefits for up to 2 million eligible spouses and children of veterans.

I strongly supported the 21st Century Montgomery GI Bill Enhancement Act which we passed in the House. This bill increases the Montgomery GI Bill education benefit by 70 percent over the next 3 years and raises the value of VA education benefits from \$23,400 annually to \$39,600.

I have co-sponsored the Veterans Hospital Emergency Repair Act which authorizes \$550 million over two years for much over-due-repair of dilapidated and obsolete Veterans medical facilities. This bill was also strongly supported in the House.

And just this week, on Thursday, November 8, 2001, the House and Senate both approved of the final appropriations for veterans for the Fiscal Year 2002. This budget increases the total spending for VA programs by \$4.3 billion,