

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

### HOUSING AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

**HON. LOIS CAPPS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 23, 2008*

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3221, the American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act.

This bill is a powerful response to the foreclosure crisis that has spread across the Nation. The recent troubles at Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have shaken the economy and the bill seeks to stabilize them by extending them limited credit and other financial support from the U.S. Treasury. These institutions are the central nervous system of mortgage liquidity in the United States, and ensuring their continued operations is vital to avoiding even more calamity in our housing markets. To help avert future mortgage crises, the bill creates a new, strong regulator for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

The bill also includes much-needed reforms of the Federal Housing Administration. The changes will help protect lower income borrowers from unscrupulous lending practices that have plagued the subprime market. And the bill provides more funding for housing counseling to help consumers avoid costly mistakes and learn more about the housing market.

Mr. Speaker, this calamity isn't confined to financial institutions; it has also spread through our towns and neighborhoods and affected millions of our neighbors. In California foreclosures have risen to a 20-year high and we are feeling this pain on the central and south coast. That's why I'm glad the American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act provides several key provisions to help homeowners.

For example, this bill permanently increases the conforming loan limits to \$625,000. Median home prices in Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo Counties are well above the national average, and our families continue struggling to obtain affordable housing. This provision will allow them to obtain financing at lower interest rates, while at the same time providing much needed liquidity to our local housing market. While I believe the limit should have been raised to \$729,750, as was temporarily done earlier this year, this permanent increase to \$625,000 is absolutely crucial for my district. I am hopeful that in the future we will continue our efforts to raise this limit so that it reflects the housing needs of my constituents.

In addition, this bill will stem foreclosures by creating a voluntary mortgage refinancing program that allows families to stay in their homes. Under this program, the Federal Housing Administration will have the authority to refinance up to \$300 billion in imperiled mortgages. For borrowers facing escalating mort-

gage payments or even foreclosure, this provision allows them to refinance their homes into more affordable, fixed-rate mortgages. To protect taxpayers, borrowers will have to agree to certain conditions regarding future sale of the home in order to participate in the program. And to ensure against the risk of taxpayers being saddled with overvalued loans, lenders holding these troubled mortgages will have to write down the loans significantly.

Too many hard working families have found themselves the victim of unscrupulous lenders and watched helplessly as their piece of the American Dream has been snatched away from them. Even more tragically, many homeowners who have had no problem keeping up with their mortgages have seen their home values and quality of life harmed by the appearance of abandoned foreclosed properties in their neighborhoods. That is why the House went against the wishes of the President and included \$3.9 billion for cities and towns to purchase and rehabilitate foreclosed homes. Abandoned properties can hurt entire communities and this money will prove vital in protecting against neighborhood decline during this crisis.

The bill also creates a \$500 million affordable housing trust fund to expand the housing options available for low-income working families and creates a first-time homebuyer tax credit worth up to \$7,500. These two provisions will undoubtedly help young families in my district better afford the costs of buying a new home.

Mr. Speaker, the hardworking families in our country need help. The House passed a very similar bill in May, which the President threatened to veto. Now that the housing and finance situation has continued to deteriorate, he has agreed to work with us in helping the American people. I say it's about time, and I hope that we have his continued cooperation as the many provisions of this legislation are carried out in our hometowns.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

### KEEP POLITICS OUT OF THE WHO; LET TAIWAN IN

**HON. BARNEY FRANK**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 24, 2008*

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, one of the gravest errors that political leaders can make is to let politics get in the way of fundamental health needs. The clearest example of this that I know of in today's world is the insistence by the People's Republic of China on blocking membership for Taiwan in the World Health Organization.

During the bird flu epidemic, the exclusion of Taiwan from the WHO was an interference with our ability as a global community to provide maximum protection for people against this terrible disease. There is of course a strong moral reason against excluding the mil-

lions of people from Taiwan from the benefits that they would receive from WHO participation. But for those for whom morality and respect for other human beings is not enough reason to overcome an effort to gain political advantage, self-interest should dictate to the PRC support for Taiwanese accession to the World Health Organization.

This is especially the case now that travel between Taiwan and other places, including those under PRC rule has greatly increased. Ideology and sovereignty are no defense against germs and viruses. The World Health Organization does very important things in defense of humanity against illness, but its ability to perform that role is hampered by the exclusion of Taiwan from the World Health Organization and in all of our interests, I believe that our Government should be taking every possible step to ensure that the World Health Organization extends to Taiwan full membership.

### HONORING JOANNE KOSEY WHO WAS NAMED PERSON OF THE YEAR FOR THE VILLAGE OF RIVERSIDE, ILLINOIS

**HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 24, 2008*

Mr. LIPINSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor JoAnne Kosey for her ongoing dedication to the community of Riverside, Illinois. JoAnne has been named Person of the Year by a combined committee made up of members from the Riverside Chamber of Commerce and the Riverside Township Lions club.

As a lifelong resident of Riverside, volunteering has always been a large part of JoAnne's life. Since high school, she has been involved in helping the community through volunteering at her church, school and for the village during her free time. Continuing into motherhood, she was able to balance her responsibilities as a working mother with her ongoing responsibility to the community. JoAnne was elected to two terms on the Riverside-Brookfield High School District 208 School Board and she also worked as a teacher at St. Joseph Grade School and Mater Christi School. Her dedication to education did not keep her from founding the local farmers market, co-chairing the 125th Anniversary Celebration, serving as the commissioner on the Historical Commission and the Economic Development Commission, and serving as a representative to the Des Plaines River Basin Steering Committee. Currently, she serves as the president of the Riverside Educational Foundation, and as a member of the Alumni Achievement Committee.

This award is a well deserved recognition of her dedication to the betterment of the village of Riverside. She is a sterling example of how the entire community benefits from volunteering. JoAnne is a credit to the village of Riverside and to the State of Illinois. She has

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clearly shown how much of a difference to a community the help of one person can make.

It is my great privilege to recognize JoAnne Kosey for being named Person of the Year for the Village of Riverside, Illinois.

AMERICAN HOUSING RESCUE AND FORECLOSURE PREVENTION ACT OF 2008

**HON. BOB ETHERIDGE**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 24, 2008*

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3221, American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008. This bill is a critical step towards stabilizing our housing market and providing assistance to thousands of Americans facing foreclosure.

The problems that persist in our housing market are serious and affect millions of Americans. Thousands of families are in danger of losing their homes. In my state of North Carolina alone, PEW Charity Trusts and the Center for Responsible Lending estimate there will be 53,254 foreclosures in 2008 and 2009. Not only does foreclosure strike at the heart of these families' financial stability, but the damage spreads across all of our communities. The same study shows that over 330,000 homes in North Carolina will be devalued by the spillover impact of the foreclosures, and North Carolina stands to lose over \$860 million in property values.

However, H.R. 3221 takes strong steps to help families facing foreclosure while also bolstering our housing market and economy. This bill also creates a voluntary FHA initiative that provides mortgage refinancing assistance to allow families to stay in their homes while also strengthening the housing market. This voluntary plan would require lenders to reduce some of the existing mortgage in order to qualify for FHA backing, and would require borrowers to return portions of any future profits on the house to the government in order to prevent foreclosure. It is important to note that under H.R. 3221, only owner-occupied homes facing foreclosure can qualify for this mortgage assistance, and speculators, investors, and second-homeowners are not eligible. This provision represents a compromise by all participating parties and can keep people in their homes and improve surrounding communities.

Provisions in this bill reform and modernize the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) as well as government sponsored entities, GSEs, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. These changes will strengthen the FHA and make it a bigger force in the market to provide a better alternative to some of the riskier, more exotic loans that have spurred much of this crisis. The recent reports of major losses at Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are troubling. The GSEs are crucial engines that are necessary to drive the slumping mortgage market that provides housing for millions across the country. H.R. 3221 includes a plan to give the Treasury Department increased authority to loan and buy credit in these GSEs. This backing will boost confidence in the GSEs in the marketplace, and may make further action unnecessary. Along with this expanded credit, H.R. 3221 includes a stronger and more independent regulator to oversee Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and set their capital standards.

Finally, the American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008 also includes a tax benefit of up to \$7,500 for first-time homebuyers as well as an additional credit on property taxes for existing homeowners who claim the standard deduction. I am proud of the strong military presence in North Carolina's Second Congressional District, and I applaud the provisions that specifically help returning soldiers stay in their home and the housing counseling and benefit initiatives that target veterans. These measures will help revive the housing market and get our sluggish economy moving in the right direction.

I support the passage of H.R. 3221, American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008, and I urge my colleagues to join me.

HONORING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF THE FBI

**HON. HENRY CUELLAR**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 24, 2008*

Mr. CUELLAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the 100th anniversary of the Federal Bureau of Investigation agency, and the brave men and women that work at the FBI Laredo Resident Agency, LRA. The FBI LRA was established in 1943, during the height of World War II, with four Special Agents assigned to the U.S.-Mexico border.

The FBI LRA was staffed throughout the end of World War II and during the Cold War with a particular focus on counter-espionage and sabotage. The focus changed during the 1960s and 1970s to a spate of new crimes involving fugitives and vehicle theft. The mission of the FBI LRA was expanded to public corruption, interstate theft, fraud, and general property crimes during the 1980s and 1990s. Currently, the FBI LRA investigates terrorism, public corruption, white collar crime, kidnappings, gangs, drug cases, and cyber crime.

Also, the FBI LRA has established a Joint Terrorism Task Force, JTTF, and a Public Corruption Task Force in the past few years to respond to potential terrorist threats and drug-trafficking violence in the U.S.-Mexico border region. Throughout the decades, the FBI LRA has evolved to meet the crime prevention needs of each decade in its five-county area of Webb, McMullen, La Salle, Zapata, and Jim Hogg, with over 30 Special Agents and support staff. The FBI LRA also works with Laredo Police Department, Office of the Inspector General—Department of Homeland Security, Department of Public Safety, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection, and the United States Border Patrol.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to have had this time to recognize the commitment of our brave men and women at the FBI Laredo Resident Agency and I applaud their efforts to safeguard the lives of my constituents along the U.S.-Mexico border, and to serve their Nation honorably. I thank you for this time.

HONORING THE URBAN LEAGUE'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY IN MADISON

**HON. TAMMY BALDWIN**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 24, 2008*

Ms. BALDWIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Urban League for a commitment to social and economic justice in the Madison area that now spans four decades. When the National Urban League's affiliate arrived on the Southside in 1968, Madison and other larger cities had few support services for economically disadvantaged people. Most civil rights groups at the time had focused on legal barriers to equality. After the eventual toppling of de jure segregation and discrimination "on the books," our communities were left void of organizations and advocacy networks focused on the unequal economic conditions African Americans and other people of color still faced. Despite the shift in terrain, the Madison Urban League committed to fulfilling the need for economic programs.

Forty years later, the Urban League of Greater Madison has retained and restored the commitment the Madison Urban League made at such a crucial point in the history of our country and our city. Today, the diverse staff at the Urban League of Greater Madison serves thousands of youth, adults, and whole families all over Dane County through a wide range of programs and services. Last year, 2,000 people were reached through various initiatives throughout the county.

To bring to the forefront its renewed commitment to economic empowerment for those overlooked and underserved, the Urban League of Greater Madison is on the verge of breaking ground for a new Center for Economic Development along Park Street in front of the Villager. The center will be more than just another building on the Southside of Madison. It will be an investment in the people there. With the capacity to offer a more comprehensive set of programs and services than it can now, the Urban League of Greater Madison will be able to empower more citizens by relocating to and reclaiming an area that is ripe for revitalization.

An anniversary celebration will be held this evening to recognize the achievements and legacy of the Urban League in Madison and to commence a new chapter in the history of the organization.

For their commitment and service to the people of Dane County, I congratulate both the National Urban League and the Urban League of Greater Madison on this momentous milestone. Thanks to the work they have already done and will continue to do, we can and will achieve better.

TRIBUTE TO CITIZENS AND OFFICIALS IN HAMILTON, BOONE AND WEBSTER COUNTIES

**HON. TOM LATHAM**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 24, 2008*

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the collective effort of citizens and officials in Hamilton, Boone and Webster