

The Pennsylvania model will work nationally, and that is why I introduced H.R. 3142, the Homeowners Emergency Mortgage Assistance (HEMA) Act, which is pending before the House Financial Services Committee. HEMA establishes an emergency mortgage assistance program for qualifying homeowners who are temporarily unable to meet their obligations due to financial hardship beyond their control. Under HEMA, homeowners would have the opportunity to regain financial stability without the immediate pressure of foreclosure. With the support of Chairman BARNEY FRANK of the Committee on Financial Services and Subcommittee Chairwoman MAXINE WATERS, the HEMA proposal was incorporated into H.R. 3766, the Main Street TARP Act. The Main Street TARP Act proposes to use unspent TARP funds to provide relief for distressed homeowners who are unable to meet their mortgage obligations due to financial hardship, as well as providing assistance to renters seeking affordable housing.

A national HEMA program offers a workable complement to President Obama's new Making Home Affordable program. Making Home Affordable has allocated \$75 billion in TARP funds to provide financial incentives to encourage participation by mortgage servicers and homeowners. Although the Treasury Department is taking steps to increase the effectiveness of Making Home Affordable by pressing mortgage servicers to put additional resources and staff into providing loan modifications that make mortgages affordable for homeowners, the scale of the problem is huge and the ability and willingness of servicers to do the work necessary is in question. The loss of six million US jobs since the start of the recession complicates the crisis as many jobless won't even have enough income for a loan modification to be effective.

A HEMA-style loan program could use TARP funds already allocated for foreclosure prevention to directly cure mortgage defaults for the unemployed. As the economy recovers most jobless workers will get back to work and be able to resume their mortgage payments. Even a portion of the \$75 billion set aside for Making Home Affordable could pay a lot of mortgage payments to bring homeowners current and not have them at the mercy of a mortgage servicer who is poorly equipped to offer them help.

Such a program could be run much more efficiently than the time consuming loan modification program. A homeowner who indicated that he or she was unemployed would provide verification of unemployment compensation to the servicer and automatically be approved for a loan that would pay any mortgage above 31 percent of their income (the target amount in Making Home Affordable modifications). The Treasury could make payments for the homeowner who is then current on the mortgage. It would cut through the disorder of the loan modification program and slow the numbers of foreclosed properties on the market.

The success of HEMAP is evident in the program's results. Since its inception, 42,700 families were saved from foreclosure by providing over \$442 million in loans to at-risk homeowners. The average loan to a distressed homeowner is \$10,500, which is much less than the \$35,000 it costs to complete most foreclosure actions. Additionally, this es-

timated average foreclosure cost does not consider the impact of foreclosures on families, neighborhoods and communities.

We have tried everything else. The Treasury has already allocated far more than \$2 billion to prevent foreclosures. It seems likely that many of those dollars will not be spent in a timely manner by mortgage servicers modifying loans. It's time to get people's mortgages paid directly and to slow the pace of home losses that are destroying families and crippling our overall economy. It's time to think outside the box about foreclosures—and way past time to keep Americans inside their homes.

IN MEMORY OF LT. COL. GEORGE
WITHERS STIER

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2009

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, it is with sadness that I inform the House of the death of my dear friend Lieutenant Colonel George Withers Stier of Lexington, Missouri.

Stier was born in December of 1919 to Earle Taggart Stier and Grace King Stier. After graduating from Wentworth Military Academy with ROTC training, he volunteered for the Army Reserves and applied for Active Duty in 1941.

During World War II, Stier showed his unyielding courage and love of country while flying the B-17 Flying Fortress. During the last of his 16 bombing missions over Germany, he and his crew were shot down and became prisoners of war at Stalag Luft III. Surviving a 50-mile forced march, Stier and his fellow airmen spent over a year as prisoners of war. On April 20, 1945, he was liberated by General George Patton and his 3rd Army's 14th Tank Battalion.

In 1948, Stier married his lovely wife Kathleen Miller Trumbull. The two returned to his hometown of Lexington, Missouri, where they operated Stier's Clothing Store, a family operation since 1906. A dedicated public servant, he served on the City Council and was president of the local Chamber of Commerce. He maintained his connection to Wentworth Military Academy by teaching business courses to our future servicemen and women.

Preceded in death by his wife Kathleen who sadly passed away in 2004, he is survived by his children, Sheila and George.

Madam Speaker, Lt. Col. George Stier was a courageous airman, a loving husband and father, and a dear friend. I trust that my fellow Members of the House will join me in extending their heartfelt condolences to his two children, family, and friends.

IN HONOR OF MAURICE A.
SCHWARTZ

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2009

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Maurice A. Schwartz of Stinson

Beach, California, who will be retiring next month as Executive Director of the Audubon Canyon Ranch (ACR). Skip Schwartz—everyone calls him Skip—a man known for his rare combination of a strong work ethic, empathy, kindness and humor, has been at the helm of ACR for thirty-four years, a time of great growth and accomplishments for the ranch.

Audubon Canyon Ranch was founded in 1962 to preserve a thickly wooded nesting place for great blue herons and great egrets on the shores of Bolinas Lagoon. Skip first saw the ranch as a visitor in the early 70s and later he and his wife became docents. In 1975 he so impressed the ACR's trustees that they hired him as Executive Director. With his commitment, boundless enthusiasm and practical know-how, Skip tackled the tough problems of a young non-profit and succeeded far beyond anyone's expectations.

Today ACR is a financially solid organization with 24 employees and 800 volunteers with exciting environmental education and research programs and preserve holdings in two counties totaling over 2,000 acres, and will be a beneficiary of a gift of another 1,700 acres in the future. ACR now includes the 1,000 acre Bolinas Lagoon Preserve near Stinson Beach; the 535-acre Bouverie Preserve near Glen Ellen in Sonoma County, the Cypress Grove Research Center on Tomales Bay and several other properties in West Marin. Recently an access agreement was signed with Jim and Shirley Modini, whose 1,725-acre Modoni Ranch in Sonoma County has been willed to ACR.

Due largely to Skip's democratic leadership skills, ACR was named this year by the North Bay Business Journal as one of the five best places to work in the North Bay. Employees—whose average length of employment is 11 years—gave Audubon Canyon Ranch the highest marks of the five firms honored. Employees cited ACR's family focus and its commitment to "walking the talk" by making every effort to make the workplace green, including establishing mileage reimbursement for bicycle use during work hours.

Under Skip's leadership, ACR scientific contributions also literally helped put Bolinas Lagoon on the map as a United Nations RAMSAR site of international significance. ACR's conservation science programs have grown to include a Research and Habitat Preservation and Restoration component.

Skip has overseen the creation of a nationally recognized elementary school environmental education program that serves schools throughout the Bay Area at no charge to them or their students. Each year, between 6,000 and 7,000 students from ethnically and economically diverse neighborhoods in four counties participate in ACR's "hands on" environmental education program.

Skip Schwartz, who has been the public face of Audubon Canyon Ranch for over three decades, will step down as Executive Director in January, but he will continue to work part time as a consultant with the organization. It appears that the Directors of Audubon Canyon Ranch know just how big Skip's shoes will be to fill. He leaves a legacy of accomplishment, but at least for some time ACR's Directors, staff and many friends will continue to benefit from his knowledge, enjoy his humor and kindness, and be inspired by his practical idealism.