

you make the qualified loan, you do not put the country at risk, but most important of all, you do not force everybody to FHA. That is what we are about to do because FHA is, by definition under Dodd-Frank, exempt from risk retention. All other loans are not, except those that will fall under the QRM, qualified residential mortgage. It would be a disaster for the recovery of American housing to force Americans to only one source of money to finance their home and put so much stress on the Federal Housing Administration that it collapses under the burden.

We need to be pragmatic when we look at issues facing housing. We need to be practical in taking Dodd-Frank and making it work for the American people. We need to recognize the value of private mortgage insurance, the value of good, solid underwriting and not put a risk retention in that is so high that we take most American mortgage lenders out of the business, isolated only for a few who dictate and write the parameters they want to write for housing. We are at a critical time in our recovery. Housing has hit the bottom, and it has bounced along the bottom, but it is showing some signs of coming back. Now would be the worst time to send a signal that mortgage money is going to be harder to get, the banks are going to have to hold 5 percent risk retention on even the best of loans and, worst of all, it would give the American people only one alternative for lending; that is, the Federal Housing Administration which, in and of itself, is already under a burden and stressed.

I appreciate the time tonight to bring this message to the floor that as we write the rules to promulgate the intent of the Dodd-Frank bill in terms of residential housing and finance, we be sure we do so in such a way that we meet the demands of a vibrant marketplace rather than restricting it, putting a burden on FHA, and protracting what has already been a long and difficult housing recession.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we proceed to a period of morning business with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY AND THE LETTER FROM COLONEL WILLIAM BARRET TRAVIS

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise to read the letter from COL William Barret Travis from the Alamo, something I have done every year since Senator Phil Gramm retired. He read the letter on Texas Independence Day every year after Senator Tower left office. So we have a tradition every Texas Independence Day of a Texas Senator reading the very moving speech from William Barret Travis.

Today is the 175th anniversary of our independence from Mexico.

This past Sunday, I had the honor of participating in the Washington-on-the-Brazos' 175th anniversary celebration of the Texas Declaration of Independence signing. It was a special occasion that brought together almost all the 59 signers' descendants. Thousands of proud Texans came to commemorate this most pivotal event in Texas's legacy of freedom and patriotism.

My great-great-grandfather, Charles S. Taylor, was willing to sign the document that declared Texas free from Mexico. I am humbled to occupy the Senate seat from Texas that was first held by Thomas Jefferson Rusk, who was another signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence.

Those 59 brave men did not just come in and sign a paper. They took great risk. They put their lives, their treasures, and the lives of their families on the line to do this. One hundred seventy-five years later, sometimes you do not think of how hard it was for them to declare this separation from Mexico and know that there was going to be a war fought over it because the Mexican Army was in San Antonio at the Alamo, getting ready to take the Alamo from William Barret Travis and the roughly 180 men who were there who were trying to defend that fortress.

The accounts of the revolution have been some of our most dramatic stories of patriotism in both Texas and America.

We remember the sacrifice of William Barret Travis, Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and the others who died bravely defending the Alamo against Santa Anna and his thousands of trained Mexican troops.

They were outnumbered by more than 10 to 1. For 13 days of glory, the Alamo defenders bought critical time for GEN Sam Houston, knowing they would probably never leave the mission alive.

The late Senator John Tower started the tradition of reading a stirring account by Alamo commander William Barret Travis, and Senator Gramm and now I have continued that tradition.

From within the walls of the Alamo, under siege by Santa Anna's Mexican Army of 6,000 trained soldiers, Colonel Travis wrote this letter to the people of Texas and all Americans:

Fellow Citizens and Compatriots: I am besieged with a thousand or more of the Mexi-

cans under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continual Bombardment and cannonade for 24 hours and have not lost a man. The enemy has demanded surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison is to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken. I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, and our flag still waves proudly over the wall. I shall never surrender our retreat.

Then I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism, of everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid with all dispatch. The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily and will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due his honor and that of his country—Victory or Death.

—William Barrett Travis, Lt. Col.
Commander.

Steadfast to the end and independent to the core, that is the essence of Texas.

Had Colonel Travis and his men not laid down their lives in the Battle of the Alamo, Sam Houston's victory at San Jacinto just 2 months later would never have been possible. Texas's freedom might not have been won.

It is important that every generation of Texas pause to remember the patriots of the Texas revolution: each soldier who gave his life at the Alamo, Goliad, and San Jacinto; the 59 men who met at Washington-on-the-Brazos, putting their lives in danger by signing that Declaration of Independence and becoming heroes for a cause; and the bravery of the women who gave up an easier life in the East to join the struggle to make Texas the marvelous place it is today.

My great-great-grandmother was one of those brave women. She took her four children in what was called the Runaway Scrape, trying to flee eastward from Nacogdoches, where they lived, to try to escape the advancing Mexican Army and the Indian raids that were happening all over east Texas.

My great-great-grandmother lost all four of her living children during that sad and hard time for Texas. But that was not the last chapter in the revolution. She came back to Nacogdoches, met my great-great-grandfather, who was there signing the Texas Declaration of Independence, and had nine more children.

So the women also were heroes and heroines of this time.

It is my honor to memorialize the Texas legacy of freedom and patriotism in this way.

I ask unanimous consent that my speech at the Washington-on-the-Brazos celebration this past weekend be printed in the RECORD.

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

WASHINGTON-ON-THE-BRAZOS CELEBRATION REMARKS

(Delivered February 27, 2011 at Washington-on-the-Brazos Historic Site)

Thank you so much. What a great representative Lois Kolkhorst is for this area

and so fitting to have someone who loves the history. Thank you, Lois, and thank you for that lovely introduction and thank you for this welcome.

I wanted to say especially thank you to the Washington-on-the-Brazos Association and all of the associations that keep our Texas history alive. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts because we are passing it through the generations because of you. Thank you all.

You know it is so special that you have honored all of us, the descendants, on the 175th anniversary, because those 59 brave men did not just come in and sign a paper.

They took great risk. They put their lives, their treasures, and the lives of their families on the line to do it. And sometimes, 175 years later, sometimes we don't think about the risk that they were willing to take.

They were actually elected as delegates by their peers in the little towns throughout Texas because every one of those people wanted to govern themselves.

In Texas, independence is not merely a state of being free from tyranny; it is a spirit instilled within us, anchored in our knowledge that we are part of something truly unique.

Across the nation, Texans have earned the reputation for being exceptionally proud—a little too much, some people think! But Texans earned it; they earned it 175 years ago, and we have passed it from generation to generation.

We are the only state that came in to our nation as a nation, and with that distinction comes a vivid history and a storied past unlike any other.

What some interpret as a brazen stubbornness—we know to be a fierce and steadfast will to live in freedom.

When that will was tested, Texans rose up and rebelled against oppression.

In the time leading up to the Texas Revolution, colonists were living under the centralized power of the Mexican government. Its steel grip on trade, religion, and heavy taxation, conflicted with the yearning for independence that drew the early American settlers to Texas.

The accounts of our revolution have become some of the most dramatic stories of patriotism in both Texas and American history.

We remember the sacrifice of Colonel William Barret Travis, Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and the 189 men who died bravely defending the Alamo against Santa Anna and his thousands of trained Mexican troops.

Outnumbered by more than 10 to one, for 13 days of glory, the Alamo defenders bought critical time for General Sam Houston, knowing they would never leave the mission alive.

Had they not laid down their lives in that seminal battle, Sam Houston's victory at San Jacinto just two months later would never have been possible. Texas' freedom might not have been won.

Those who signed the Texas Declaration of Independence, where we stand today, were akin to those who signed the American Declaration of Independence in 1776. They were the leaders of this area. They risked their lives and those of their family when they put pen to paper.

And the 59 Texans who are so ably represented here today were considered traitors to Mexico as they used their voices, their professions, and positions of influence to wage critical battles in the revolution.

My great-great-grandfather, Charles Taylor, was one of these patriots whose principles and will to survive were tested.

In 1836, he was land commissioner in East Texas, responsible for issuing titles and collecting taxes. He served as alcalde, essentially the mayor, of Nacogdoches Territory.

This position of course made him a representative of the government of Mexico, but he was witnessing firsthand the widening rift between Texans and Mexico's emerging autocracy.

As the movement for independence from Mexico began to grow, he sided, of course, with Texas in the dispute with the central government over taxation.

Secretary of War Thomas Rusk asked Taylor to allow the fees entrusted to him to be used to purchase weapons for the Texas army.

He was technically obligated to pass the money to Mexico, so Rusk's request presented him with an ethical dilemma.

But Taylor ultimately agreed, believing that the people who paid the taxes wanted and deserved freedom to govern themselves.

With this money and every penny they could collect all over Texas from the towns everywhere, they were armed for the battle. But remember they had no money for uniforms, they were not formally trained. What they did have was the will to fight for something greater than themselves.

As he prepared his men for the final stand in the fight for freedom at San Jacinto, these were Sam Houston's words, "We view ourselves on the eve of battle. We are nerved for the contest, and must conquer or perish. It is vain to look for present aid: for it is not there. We must now act or abandon all hope! Rally to the standard, and be no longer the scoff of mercenary tongues! Be men, be free men, that your children may bless their father's name."

After the victory at the battle of San Jacinto and Santa Anna's surrender, Secretary of War Rusk wrote the report. I love these words. His description:

"The sun was sinking in the horizon as the battle commenced; but at the close of the conflict, the sun of liberty and independence rose in Texas, never, it is hoped, to be obscured by the clouds of despotism . . . The unerring aim and irresistible energy of the Texas army could not be withstood. It was freemen fighting against the minions of tyranny and the results proved the inequality of such a contest."

I now want to bring attention to another contingent of brave Texans whose involvement in the revolution was significant, but sometimes overlooked: the women. They struggled to keep their families together, or even alive.

One of our state's first historians, Mary Austin Holley, who was the cousin of Stephen F. Austin, chronicled the daring, enterprising nature of Texas' women settlers.

She wrote that these hardy women hunted with their husbands and rode long distances on horseback to attend social events with their ball gowns stuffed in their saddlebags.

During the Texas Revolution, their vigor and free-spiritedness translated to steadfast courage and unshakeable resolve to survive and protect their families in the face of extreme trial.

Thomas Rusk himself wrote, "The men of Texas deserved much credit, but more was due the women. Armed men facing a foe could not but be brave; but the women, with their little children around them, without means of defense or power to resist, faced danger and death with unflinching courage."

The Runaway Scrape of 1836 swept every family in Central and East Texas. My great-great-grandmother, Anna Maria Taylor, was one of the thousands of refugees fleeing eastward from the Mexican advance and the threat of Indian raids.

With her husband, Charles Taylor, attending the convention of delegates right here, Anna Maria, like many of your great-great-grandmothers struggled to escape on foot.

Anna Maria fought to feed her four children. Despite widespread food shortages, she

did everything she could to shield them from seasonal rains and disease.

Tragically, like so many mothers of the time, she lost every one of her four children.

But the trials of the revolution were not the final chapters in their lives.

After the War of Independence ended, Anna Maria and Charles went right back to Nacogdoches, and she bore nine more children.

The families of all of you here today, as descendants, recovered and rebuilt their lives after independence was won, and they started building Texas at the same time.

I inherited Thomas Rusk's world atlas dated 1850 which is now in my office reception room in Washington, DC.

According to the atlas, in 1850, Texas had just over 212,500 people. And we learned just last week that our state's population today is over 25 million.

I think the 59 signers of the Declaration of Independence would be awestruck by this staggering figure. Oh, how far we've come!

When I finish my term, I will bring Thomas Rusk's world atlas back to its rightful home in Texas, to Stephen F. Austin University, which is built on land he owned. There it will be on display for future generations to see.

In order to secure our bright future, we must preserve our rich history.

Each year on March 2, I read William Barret Travis' letter from the Alamo, because it is so stirring and so amazingly brave.

The late Senator John Tower started the tradition of reading it every single year. Senator Phil Gramm continued it, and I took it when Phil retired.

Colonel Travis wrote in that letter, "I shall never surrender or retreat." And displaying the ultimate courage in the face of certain demise, he wrote, "I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country—Victory or Death."

Steadfast to the end and independent to the core—that is the essence of Texas.

Finally . . . the cliff notes to my speech today are:

That we, the descendants of these great 59 men and their wives and all of those who followed, and all of those in these associations who have no descendants but know that Texas is special, it is important that every generation of Texas pause to remember the patriots of the Texas revolution:

Each soldier who gave his life at the Alamo, Goliad, and San Jacinto;

The 59 men who met at Washington-on-the-Brazos, putting their lives in danger by signing that Declaration of Independence and becoming heroes for a cause;

And the bravery of the women who gave up an easier life in the East to join the struggle to make Texas the marvelous place that it is today.

It is our challenge to pass their spirit to our children and our grandchildren. This gathering today and the annual celebration that we have of Texas Independence Day do just that.

Thank you! And God bless Texas!

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I yield the floor.

REMEMBERING KATE IRELAND

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life, legacy and extraordinary accomplishments of Ms. Kate Ireland, who passed away peacefully at her home at Foshalee Plantation in northern Florida on February 15, 2011. She was 80. Kate was a prime example of a woman who gave back to