

and significantly reduce homeowner's utility bills.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, would the Senator yield for a question?

I would like to commend my colleagues for their support for energy efficiency programs that reduce residential energy consumption. Expanding the use of these technologies in our everyday lives is a commitment to our future and will create jobs in Ohio.

However, I am also concerned that adjusting underwriting or appraisal requirements without sufficient protections to ensure a family has the ability to repay their loan could have unintended consequences that put our housing market at risk, which I know is not the intention of the sponsors.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I would like to associate myself with the comments made by the Senator from Ohio. I also support the need for greater energy efficiency and applaud the sponsors of this amendment for promoting greater energy efficiency. At the same time, I do have some concerns.

Specifically, I am concerned about whether and how potential energy savings can safely be incorporated as part of the mortgage underwriting process at the FHA, especially when there may not be a consensus on how to define and accurately quantify future energy savings.

Another concern is the interaction of estimated energy savings in the underwriting and appraisal processes. This could happen because the SAVE Act requires expected energy cost savings to be used as an offset to certain regular expenses, such as property taxes, while also requiring the estimated energy savings of a home to be added to the home's appraisal. While not the intent of the authors, I am concerned that this could tilt the mortgage market towards more expensive products without adequate safeguards to protect borrowers.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, we would ask the sponsors of this amendment to work with us to ensure that we can accomplish our shared goals of encouraging investment in energy efficient homes while also maintaining a safe and sound mortgage market for homebuyers.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, moving forward, we intend to work with the Senate Banking Committee and HUD to address any technical or substantive concerns that have arisen. Specifically, it is our intention to ensure that FHA has the ability to insure loans for energy efficient homes while also including protections to maintain accurate evaluations of a borrower's ability to repay.

Additionally, as this amendment is being implemented, we understand that HUD's ability to test and modify the savings that may be counted should be considered. In fact, we considered these concerns while drafting this legislation. The methodology we included for measuring energy efficient savings is an ANSI certified standard and the

most widely accepted technology in today's marketplace. Over 1 million homes have already been energy rated using this technology. And this is the same underlying technology successfully utilized by the EPA's Energy Star program.

Again, we are pleased that the Senate passed our amendment, and we look forward to working with the Banking Committee and HUD on improvements.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am deeply disappointed that my Republican colleagues continue to play politics with our judicial system.

There are currently 79 judicial vacancies in this country—28 of which are judicial emergency vacancies. In each of these districts across the country, Americans are waiting for their cases to be heard, but instead of justice, they are left hanging in the lurch.

I have said it before, and I will say it again: Justice delayed is justice denied.

Senate Republicans refuse to act to confirm Judge Merrick Garland—who has more Federal judicial experience than any other Supreme Court candidate in history—to the Supreme Court, and they refuse to act on the 20 judicial nominees who were reported out of the Judiciary Committee by voice vote. It is outrageous that Senate Republicans stubbornly refuse to move these nominations forward, letting these accomplished and qualified nominees languish.

One of those judges is Mark Young, an excellent nominee for the Central District Court of California, which is ranked 11th in the Nation in weighted case filings per judgeship.

We need to fill this seat as soon as possible, and Judge Young is an extraordinary candidate. I was honored to introduce him at his nomination hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee last October and go over his impeccable resume.

He has served as a Los Angeles County Superior Court judge since 2008 and has 10 years of experience as a prosecutor in the U.S. attorney's office in Los Angeles.

He holds degrees from the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of Southern California Gould School of Law; and he has won numerous awards from organizations including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award—one of the Department of Justice's highest honors.

The people of the Central District of California need his leadership, and the overworked judges of the Central District need his help.

We also have two additional candidates from California who are awaiting Judiciary Committee hearings.

Judge Paul L. Abrams was nominated by President Obama in December

2015 to serve as the U.S. District Court Judge for the Central District. Judge Abrams is currently a U.S. magistrate judge for the Central District, a post he has held since 2002.

He began his career in private practice and then worked as a legal aid lawyer before serving in the Federal public defender's office, eventually becoming a supervising deputy Federal public defender. He holds degrees from the University of California, Berkeley, and Boalt Hall School of Law.

Judge Lucy Koh, currently serving in the Northern District, was nominated by President Obama for the Ninth Circuit Court in February of this year. The daughter of Korean immigrants and a Harvard graduate, Judge Koh began her legal career as a Women's Law and Public Policy Fellow for the Senate Judiciary Committee.

At the U.S. Department of Justice, she served as a special assistant to the Deputy Attorney General before spending 3 years as a Federal prosecutor in Los Angeles, where she was awarded the Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Louis J. Freeh Award for Demonstrated Excellence in Prosecuting a Major Criminal Case. She then spent 9 years in private practice. She served on the Superior Court for Santa Clara County until 2010, when she was appointed to the Northern District, becoming the first Korean American woman to serve as a Federal district court judge.

Each of these excellent candidates has flawless credentials, broad support, and they are ready to serve. So what are we waiting for? The American people cannot wait for justice—and they shouldn't have to.

Let's move forward with giving each of these excellent judicial candidates the consideration and vote that they deserve.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RELEASE OF THE CHURCH COMMITTEE REPORT

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I wish to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the release of the report by the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, better known as the Church Committee.

On this day in 1976, the first of five books detailing egregious abuses of power by the intelligence community was released by the Church Committee. The report was the first ever comprehensive oversight study of the intelligence community, which had operated largely without any oversight since its founding during World War II. Prior to this study, the Intelligence Committees did not exist in either the Senate or the House, and there was no formal apparatus to check the actions of the Nation's intelligence community.

The Church Committee truly was the first of its kind. It grew out of extraordinary circumstances during a period