

November 13, 2001

GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE OF
GINNIE MAE AND FREDDIE MAC

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 13, 2001

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, as the Vice Chairman of the Capital Markets Subcommittee of the Financial Services, I wanted to join in the concern expressed by the Subcommittee Chairman RICHARD BAKER about a proposal to expand the government guarantee provided by Ginnie Mae (the Government National Mortgage Association) into the conventional mortgage market.

Last week H.R. 3206, "The Home Ownership Expansion and Opportunities Act of 2001," was introduced in the House of Representatives. While I strongly support the spirit and intent of this proposal, I am deeply concerned that the unintended consequence of the bill will be to make the American Taxpayer liable for unnecessary risk in the event of an economic downturn.

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

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

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 scientific 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

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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, including a \$1.2 billion increase in VA health care. There will also be a 16 percent boost in funding for the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) to remedy the backlog of compensation claims as well as an additional \$300 million for the Veterans Hospital Emergency Repair Act. I am proud that Congress could pass this legislation before we return to our districts to honor our veterans.

There can be no compromise when it comes to our veterans. Defending the Constitution of the United States is the greatest duty the nation can ask of its citizens. These men and women answered the call to duty and performed it to the highest standard. I will do everything in my power to ensure that the promises made to our veterans are kept.

Today we must prove to the world our commitment to preserving peace and democracy. We are showing the world the pride we have in our country and the values that we hold dear. It is because of our veterans that we have this tradition of freedom. They defended the idea so many years ago. They fought and sacrificed to ensure our peace. They are the inspiration which keeps the dream of democracy alive for us and everyone around the world. And this weekend in Sussex County, we bring this point home as we honor the heroes in our midst. Let us renew the dreams and the spirit of brotherhood that brought this nation through more than two centuries of struggle and kept it vibrant and free.

Finally let me state as clearly as I can: I am committed to ensuring that Congress will take all appropriate actions to ensure that our veterans are properly supported. They were there when the nation called; now we must be there when they need our help.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the Veterans of Sussex County,

New Jersey, that will be recognized this weekend at the County Salute to all Military Veterans from Sussex County. And I urge my colleagues to join me in keeping our promise to our nation's heroes—our veterans.

RECOGNIZING MR. ROMANO PRODI, PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, AND HIS REMARKS TO THE CYPRUS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 13, 2001

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, on October 25, Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission, spoke before the plenary of the Cyprus House of Representatives while on a two-day official visit to Cyprus.

During his speech, Mr. Prodi stated that Cyprus will join the EU and will be among the first candidate countries to do so. As a strong advocate of Cyprus' accession to the European Union, I believe that Cyprus' accession would be good for the stability of the region, as well as for the prospects for serious and good faith negotiations between the parties in Cyprus.

To that end, I am honored to submit for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the introduction and text of Mr. Prodi's historic speech to the Cyprian House of Representatives.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MR. DEMETRIS CHRISTOFIAS

It is with particular pleasure and great excitement that I have the privilege to welcome to the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus the President of the European Commission Mr. Romano Prodi.

Mr. Romano Prodi is a distinguished personality of international calibre who has associated his name with the steady furtherance of the cause of European integration. At the helm of the European Commission since 1999 the systematic and principled culture on his part of the European voice effuses common values, beliefs and civilization originating from our common European heritage.

Your visit to Cyprus, Mr. President, is taking place at difficult times which humanity is experiencing in a tragic way today. It is comforting to note that with your firm positions you have struck the right note and given the right way of addressing terrorism by making clear that the reaction of the international community, with which the Cyprus Republic has aligned itself against terrorism, is not a war against cultures or a conflict of religions. It is imperative that the European Union oppose a united world of peace, democracy, equality, prosperity and international understanding and solidarity with Man in its epicentre against every sort of terrorists.

The Cyprus Republic believing unwaveringly in the future of Europe continues its efforts firmly and decisively for the harmonization of its national legislation with the *acquis communautaire*. The Cyprus Parliament plays its own part and faces with responsibility as a first priority the harmonization process. Our progress in our accession negotiations is due to a great extent to

the common effort of all the political powers in Cyprus but also to the general support offered by public opinion. These efforts made by Cyprus but also the proven dedication to democratic institutions and European ideals and principles are acknowledged and clearly recorded in the latest progress report by the European Commission on Cyprus.

As regards the process for the solution of the Cyprus problem, I would like to emphatically stress that the President of the Republic participates with the support of the National Council in the effort under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General with all goodwill for the solution of the problem on the basis of United Nations Resolutions and the High Level Agreements. I would like to underline that our expectation is that a united Cyprus join the European Union. I would like at the same time, however, to point out that our will must not be misinterpreted. It is not possible for Cyprus to accept the absurd demands made by Turkey and the Turkish occupation leader Mr. Denktash which are followed by threats. Especially his unrealistic claim for a direct or an indirect recognition of the occupation regime as a state entity just to reach a settlement to the Cyprus problem.

I would like to avail myself of the opportunity of your presence here, Mr. President, to express the warmest thanks on behalf of the Cyprus people for the firm promotion by the European Commission of the provision of the Helsinki Summit decision which envisages that the solution of the Cyprus problem is not a prerequisite for the accession of Cyprus to the European Union as well as for the conviction that Cyprus will become a member of the European Union during the first wave of enlargement.

With these few thoughts, Mr. President of the European Commission, I welcome you once again to the Cyprus Parliament.

SPEECH BY MR. ROMANO PRODI, PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

In these changing and difficult times, I was particularly moved at being invited to speak today to the elected representatives of the people of Cyprus. For democracy is at the heart of our system of government in Europe.

Democracy is the guarantee not only of human rights and fundamental freedoms but also of security, stability and well being. Especially at the present time, when the international community faces so many challenges.

The European Union is a community of law and, you, the legislators of Cyprus, are working every day to ensure that your country becomes part of this community and strengthens it.

This is all the more important in the light of the appalling attacks on the United States on 11 September.

The European Union has expressed its solidarity with the innocent victims and is contributing vigorously to the fight against terrorism.

Cyprus, like the other candidates for EU membership, immediately expressed its abhorrence for those attacks and aligned itself with the EU position on terrorism and the operations to eliminate it.

But deeds are even more important than words. Cyprus has taken practical measures to combat illegal arms sales and transshipments and to freeze funds that might be used to sponsor terrorism. These, and the other steps taken by Cyprus since 11 September, are deeply appreciated in the European Union. Recent events vividly bring to mind the *raison d'être* of the enlargement