

May 16, 2001

THE NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSING ASSISTANCE AND SELF-DETERMINATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2001

HON. J.D. HAYWORTH

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2001

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I come before this House today to introduce legislation with Congressman DALE KILDEE that will help make the dream of homeownership more accessible to Native American families. Five years ago, my friend and former colleague Congressman Rick Lazio and I worked together to write the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-330). This law has revolutionized Indian housing, and Congressman KILDEE and I are pleased to offer a bipartisan bill that would reauthorize this Act for an additional five years.

Mr. Speaker, the Congress set out on a path during the 104th Congress to support tribal self-determination through the passage of NAHASDA. Prior to 1996, Native Americans were rolled into standard public housing programs that were insufficient to meet the unique needs of Native American tribes. NAHASDA has changed that. For the first time, tribes have been able to assess their own needs and access funds through a single, flexible block grant that allows for innovation and creativity. The block grant program supports new partnerships between the Federal and tribal governments and the private sector, and provides the tools needed for tribal governments to help their members achieve a higher standard of living.

After only a few years of implementation, NAHASDA has proven itself invaluable in this effort. Statistics from the Department of Housing and Urban Development show that today there are nearly 25,000 units of housing under construction or in development, a twelve-fold increase in production since 1996, the last year that tribes were covered by public housing programs.

Although originally a sound bill when it was passed in 1996, it took implementation to show where the law might be improved to more effectively serve its purpose. Reacting accordingly, the Congress further refined the Act with two packages of amendments that were approved with wide bipartisan support in 1998 and 2000.

The difference in Indian housing before NAHASDA and now, particularly with these new amendments in place, is astounding. NAHASDA provides tribal governments and tribally-designated housing entities with the ability and responsibility to strategically plan their own communities' development, focusing on the long-term health of the community without the burden of excessive regulation. Offering the maximum amount of flexibility in the use of housing dollars, while still upholding strict accountability standards, NAHASDA affirms the self-determination of tribes and allows for local problem-solving.

Furthermore, the formula-driven block grant allows tribes to involve private markets and private real estate entities to improve eco-

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nomie conditions in Indian country. Simply put, NAHASDA facilitates a better use of federal dollars to address the needs of Indian communities.

Mr. Speaker, the positive impact NAHASDA has had in the lives of so many Native people is nothing short of remarkable. With its emphasis on self-determination and responsibility at the local level, I hope that the House will act quickly to approve the NAHASDA reauthorization legislation we are introducing today. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House, as well as in the Senate and the Bush administration, to ensure that the American Dream becomes a reality for Native Americans.

NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSING ASSISTANCE AND SELF-DETERMINATION REAUTHORIZATION BILL

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2001

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be an original cosponsor of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) reauthorization bill. The NAHASDA, enacted in 1996, was the first piece of comprehensive housing legislation directed solely to Native American and Alaska Native people. The Act provides basic housing, basic plumbing, basic water infrastructure, heat, and electricity to many of our country's Indian reservations. That is why I support the reauthorization of NAHASDA, an Act that has already gone so far in meeting the housing needs of our First Americans.

The success of NAHASDA is clear. In the five years since NAHASDA's enactment, twenty-five thousand housing units have been constructed or are in development. With severely overcrowded conditions in more than fifty percent of homes in tribal areas, and more than forty percent of homes with serious physical deficiencies, the need has been demonstrated and is slowly being met. While development under NAHASDA is encouraging, it is estimated that there is still an immediate need for 200,000 housing units.

NAHASDA promotes tribal self-determination. Under the Act, tribes administer their funds directly instead of the regional housing organizations administering their funds. The Act also encourages the involvement of private sector entities and promotes innovative financing.

Mr. Speaker, the NAHASDA reauthorization bill will build upon the success of the past five years by providing more housing development on our nation's Indian reservations. Housing is the backbone of economic and community development. It creates jobs and drives tribal economies. It is a basic need that can strengthen progress in other areas like education and health care too.

I would like to thank my colleague, Congressman J.D. HAYWORTH for his dedication to Native American issues, and for introducing this bill today. It is my hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will support

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this bill for what it is—a renewed commitment to the well-being of the Native American people of this nation.

HONORING THE DEDICATED SERVICE OF TRACY WALRAVEN

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2001

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the tremendous contributions Tracy Walraven has made to Tennessee's Sixth Congressional District. For the past two years, Tracy has been an invaluable part of my Washington, D.C., office.

But she is moving on to greener pastures now. Tomorrow will be her last day as my executive assistant. Although my staff and I are sad to see Tracy leave, we are glad she has taken a job that should further her incredibly bright career.

Tracy started in my office as an eager intern still in college pursuing her undergraduate degree and wanting to learn as much as possible about the workings and intricacies of Capitol Hill. Her work ethic, intelligence and research skills soon prompted me to offer her a full-time job. She has proven herself a capable, loyal employee.

Tracy has ably assumed a wide variety of responsibilities while serving in my office. She is a dedicated and talented professional who accomplishes every assigned task, no matter how complicated. Throughout all the pressures exerted in such a fast-paced workplace, her sense of humor has been a positive influence on everyone.

I will always have a special place in my heart for Tracy, who, like myself, is a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University. Congratulations on your new job, Tracy, and may God bless you in your future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING THE ARTISTIC TALENTS OF BRANDON BARCHFELD

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2001

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the tremendous artistic ability of a young man from my Congressional District, Brandon Barchfeld of Thomas Jefferson High School. Brandon is the top winner of the 2001 18th Congressional District High School Art Competition, An Artistic Discovery.

Brandon's colored pencil piece, entitled, "Alaina," is a beautiful, vibrant depiction of a young lady who is sitting at a desk while taking notes. He has captured a moment out of this individual's life and leaves us wondering what it is for which she appears to be listening so intently. It is a piece of artwork that leaves you mesmerized by the value of a moment in time.

Brandon's artwork was selected from a number of outstanding entries to this year's competition. I hope that he and his family are proud of this accomplishment.