

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2735

To establish the Council on Healthy Housing, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 7, 2008

Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. HAGEL) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

A BILL

To establish the Council on Healthy Housing, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Healthy Housing
5 Council Act of 2008”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) In the United States—

9 (A) 6,000,000 households live in homes

10 with moderate or severe physical hazards;

1 (B) 24,000,000 homes have significant
2 lead-based paint hazards;

3 (C) 11,000,000 homes have had leaks in
4 the last 12 months;

5 (D) 6,000,000 homes have had signs of
6 mice in the last 3 months; and

7 (E) 1 in 15 homes have dangerous levels of
8 radon.

9 (2) Residents of housing that is poorly de-
10 signed, constructed, or maintained are at risk for
11 cancer, carbon monoxide poisoning, burns, falls, ro-
12 dent bites, childhood lead poisoning, asthma, and
13 other illnesses and injuries. Vulnerable subpopula-
14 tions, such as children and the elderly, are at ele-
15 vated risk for housing-related illnesses and injuries.

16 (3) Because substandard housing typically
17 poses the greatest risks, the disparities in the dis-
18 tribution of housing-related health hazards are strik-
19 ing. 1,200,000 housing units with significant lead-
20 based paint hazards house low-income families with
21 children under 6 years of age.

22 (4) Minority populations also tend to be dis-
23 proportionately affected by housing-related illnesses,
24 including lead poisoning and asthma. According to
25 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,

1 non-Hispanic blacks and Mexican Americans are ap-
2 proximately 3 times as likely to have elevated blood-
3 lead levels, compared to non-Hispanic whites. The
4 non-Hispanic black population has an asthma mor-
5 tality rate 3 times greater than the rate for the non-
6 Hispanic white population.

7 (5) The annual costs for environmentally attrib-
8 utable childhood diseases in the United States, in-
9 cluding lead poisoning, asthma, and cancer, total
10 \$54,900,000,000. This amount is approximately 3
11 percent of total health care costs.

12 (6) Appropriate housing design, construction,
13 and maintenance, timely correction of deficiencies,
14 planning efforts, and low-cost preventative measures
15 can reduce the incidence of serious injury or death,
16 improve the ability of residents to survive in the
17 event of a major catastrophe, and contribute to over-
18 all well-being and mental health. Housing units that
19 are kept lead-safe are approximately 25 percent less
20 likely to have another child with elevated blood lead
21 levels. Properly installed and maintained smoke
22 alarms reduce the risk of fire deaths by 50 percent.

23 (7) Providing healthy housing to families and
24 individuals in the United States will help prevent an
25 estimated 240,000 elevated blood lead levels in

1 young children, 11,000 unintentional injury deaths,
2 12,000,000 nonfatal injuries, 3,000 deaths in house
3 fires, 14,000 burn injuries, and 21,000 radon-associ-
4 ated lung cancer deaths that occur in United States
5 housing each year, as well as 20,000,000 asthma
6 cases and 14,000,000 missed school days.

7 (8) While there are many programs in place to
8 address housing-related health hazards, these pro-
9 grams are fragmented and spread across many agen-
10 cies, making it difficult for at-risk families and indi-
11 viduals to access assistance or to receive comprehen-
12 sive information.

13 (9) Better coordination among Federal agencies
14 is needed, as is better coordination at State and
15 local levels, to ensure that families and individuals
16 can access government programs and services in an
17 effective and efficient manner.

18 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

19 In this Act, the following definitions shall apply:

20 (1) COUNCIL.—The term “Council” means the
21 Interagency Council on Healthy Housing established
22 under section 4.

23 (2) HOUSING.—The term “housing” means any
24 form of residence, including rental housing, home-

1 ownership, group home, or supportive housing ar-
2 rangement.

3 (3) HEALTHY HOUSING.—The term “healthy
4 housing” means housing that is designed, con-
5 structed, rehabilitated, and maintained in a manner
6 that supports the health of the occupants of such
7 housing.

8 (4) HOUSING-RELATED HEALTH HAZARD.—The
9 term “housing-related health hazard” means any bi-
10 ological, physical, or chemical source of exposure or
11 condition either in, or immediately adjacent to, hous-
12 ing, that can adversely affect human health.

13 (5) LOW-INCOME FAMILIES AND INDIVID-
14 UALS.—The term “low-income families and individ-
15 uals” means any household or individual with an in-
16 come at or below 200 percent of the Federal poverty
17 line.

18 (6) POVERTY LINE.—The term “poverty line”
19 means the official poverty line defined by the Office
20 of Management and Budget based on the most re-
21 cent data available from the Bureau of the Census.

22 (7) PROGRAM.—The term “program” includes
23 any Federal, State, or local program providing hous-
24 ing or financial assistance, health care, mortgages,
25 bond and tax financing, homebuyer support courses,

1 financial education, mortgage insurance or loan
2 guarantees, housing counseling, supportive services,
3 energy assistance, or other assistance related to
4 healthy housing.

5 (8) SERVICE.—The term “service” includes
6 public and environmental health services, housing
7 services, energy efficiency services, human services,
8 and any other services needed to ensure that fami-
9 lies and individuals in the United States have access
10 to healthy housing.

11 **SEC. 4. INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HEALTHY HOUSING.**

12 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the ex-
13 ecutive branch an independent council to be known as the
14 Interagency Council on Healthy Housing.

15 (b) OBJECTIVES.—The objectives of the Council are
16 as follows:

17 (1) To promote the supply of and demand for
18 healthy housing in the United States through capac-
19 ity building, technical assistance, education, and
20 public policy.

21 (2) To promote coordination and collaboration
22 among the Federal departments and agencies in-
23 volved with housing, public health, energy efficiency,
24 emergency preparedness and response, and the envi-
25 ronment to improve services for families and individ-

1 uals residing in inadequate or unsafe housing and to
 2 make recommendations about needed changes in
 3 programs and services with an emphasis on—

4 (A) maximizing the impact of existing pro-
 5 grams and services by transitioning the focus of
 6 such programs and services from categorical ap-
 7 proaches to comprehensive approaches that con-
 8 sider and address multiple housing-related
 9 health hazards;

10 (B) reducing or eliminating areas of over-
 11 lap and duplication in the provision and accessi-
 12 bility of such programs and services;

13 (C) ensuring that resources, including as-
 14 sistance with capacity building, are targeted to
 15 and sufficient to meet the needs of high-risk
 16 communities, families, and individuals; and

17 (D) facilitating access by families and indi-
 18 viduals to programs and services that help re-
 19 duce health hazards in housing.

20 (3) To identify knowledge gaps, research needs,
 21 and policy and program deficiencies associated with
 22 inadequate housing conditions and housing-related
 23 illnesses and injuries.

24 (4) To help identify best practices for achieving
 25 and sustaining healthy housing.

1 (5) To help improve the quality of existing and
2 newly constructed housing and related programs and
3 services, including those programs and services
4 which serve low-income families and individuals.

5 (6) To establish an ongoing system of coordina-
6 tion among and within such agencies or organiza-
7 tions so that the healthy housing needs of families
8 and individuals are met in a more effective and effi-
9 cient manner.

10 (c) MEMBERSHIP.—The Council shall be composed of
11 the following members:

12 (1) The Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
13 ices.

14 (2) The Secretary of Housing and Urban Devel-
15 opment.

16 (3) The Administrator of the Environmental
17 Protection Agency.

18 (4) The Secretary of Energy.

19 (5) The Secretary of Labor.

20 (6) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

21 (7) The Secretary of the Treasury.

22 (8) The Secretary of Agriculture.

23 (9) The Secretary of Education.

24 (10) The head of any other Federal agency as
25 the Council considers appropriate.

1 (11) 6 additional non-Federal employee mem-
 2 bers, as appointed by the President to serve terms
 3 not to exceed 2 years, of whom—

4 (A) 1 shall be a State or local Government
 5 Director of Health or the Environment;

6 (B) 1 shall be a State or local Government
 7 Director of Housing or Community Develop-
 8 ment;

9 (C) 2 shall represent nonprofit organiza-
 10 tions involved in housing or health issues; and

11 (D) 2 shall represent for-profit entities in-
 12 volved in the housing, banking, or health insur-
 13 ance industries.

14 (d) CO-CHAIRPERSONS.—The co-Chairpersons of the
 15 Council shall be the Secretary of Housing and Urban De-
 16 velopment and the Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
 17 ices.

18 (e) VICE CHAIR.—Every 2 years, the Council shall
 19 elect a Vice Chair from among its members.

20 (f) MEETINGS.—The Council shall meet at the call
 21 of either co-Chairperson or a majority of its members at
 22 any time, and no less often than annually.

23 **SEC. 5. FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL.**

24 (a) RELEVANT ACTIVITIES.—In carrying out the ob-
 25 jectives described in section 4(b), the Council shall—

1 (1) review Federal programs and services that
2 provide housing, health, energy, or environmental
3 services to families and individuals;

4 (2) monitor, evaluate, and recommend improve-
5 ments in existing programs and services adminis-
6 tered, funded, or financed by Federal, State, and
7 local agencies to assist families and individuals in
8 accessing healthy housing and make recommenda-
9 tions about how such agencies can better work to
10 meet the healthy housing and related needs of low-
11 income families and individuals; and

12 (3) recommend ways to—

13 (A) reduce duplication among programs
14 and services by Federal agencies that assist
15 families and individuals in meeting their
16 healthy housing and related service needs;

17 (B) ensure collaboration among and within
18 agencies in the provision and availability of pro-
19 grams and services so that families and individ-
20 uals are able to easily access needed programs
21 and services;

22 (C) work with States and local govern-
23 ments to better meet the needs of families and
24 individuals for healthy housing by—

- 1 (i) holding meetings with State and
- 2 local representatives; and
- 3 (ii) providing ongoing technical assist-
- 4 ance and training to States and localities
- 5 in better meeting the housing-related needs
- 6 of such families and individuals;
- 7 (D) identify best practices for programs
- 8 and services that assist families and individuals
- 9 in accessing healthy housing, including model—
- 10 (i) programs linking housing, health,
- 11 environmental, human, and energy serv-
- 12 ices;
- 13 (ii) housing and remodeling financing
- 14 products offered by government, quasi-gov-
- 15 ernment, and private sector entities;
- 16 (iii) housing and building codes and
- 17 regulatory practices;
- 18 (iv) existing and new consensus speci-
- 19 fications and work practices documents;
- 20 (v) capacity building and training pro-
- 21 grams that help increase and diversify the
- 22 supply of practitioners who perform assess-
- 23 ments of housing-related health hazards
- 24 and interventions to address housing-re-
- 25 lated health hazards; and

1 (vi) programs that increase commu-
 2 nity awareness of, and education on, hous-
 3 ing-related health hazards and available
 4 assessments and interventions;

5 (E) develop a comprehensive healthy hous-
 6 ing research agenda that considers health, safe-
 7 ty, environmental, and energy factors, to—

8 (i) identify cost-effective assessments
 9 and treatment protocols for housing-re-
 10 lated health hazards in existing housing;

11 (ii) establish links between housing
 12 hazards and health outcomes;

13 (iii) track housing-related health prob-
 14 lems including injuries, illnesses, and
 15 death;

16 (iv) track housing conditions that may
 17 be associated with health problems;

18 (v) identify cost-effective protocols for
 19 construction of new healthy housing; and

20 (vi) identify replicable and effective
 21 programs or strategies for addressing
 22 housing-related health hazards;

23 (4) hold biannual meetings with stakeholders
 24 and other interested parties in a location convenient
 25 for such stakeholders (or hold open Council meet-

1 ings) to receive input and ideas about how to best
2 meet the healthy housing needs of families and indi-
3 viduals;

4 (5) maintain an updated website of policies,
5 meetings, best practices, programs and services,
6 making use of existing websites as appropriate, to
7 keep people informed of the Council's activities; and

8 (6) work with member agencies to collect and
9 maintain data on housing-related health hazards, ill-
10 nesses, and injuries so that all data can be accessed
11 in 1 place and to identify and address unmet data
12 needs.

13 (b) REPORTS.—

14 (1) BY MEMBERS.—Each year the head of each
15 agency who is a member of the Council shall prepare
16 and transmit to the Council a report that briefly
17 summarizes—

18 (A) each healthy housing-related program
19 and service administered by the agency and the
20 number of families and individuals served by
21 each program or service, the resources available
22 in each program or service, as well as a break-
23 down of where each program and service can be
24 accessed;

1 (B) the barriers and impediments, includ-
2 ing statutory or regulatory, to the access and
3 use of such programs and services by families
4 and individuals, with particular attention to the
5 barriers and impediments experienced by low-
6 income families and individuals;

7 (C) the efforts made by each agency to in-
8 crease opportunities for families and individ-
9 uals, including low-income families and individ-
10 uals, to reside in healthy housing, including how
11 the agency is working with other agencies to
12 better coordinate programs and services; and

13 (D) any new data collected by each agency
14 relating to the healthy housing needs of families
15 and individuals.

16 (2) BY THE COUNCIL.—Each year the Council
17 shall prepare and transmit to the President and the
18 Congress, a report that—

19 (A) summarizes the reports required in
20 paragraph (1);

21 (B) utilizes recent data to assess the na-
22 ture of housing-related health hazards, and as-
23 sociated illnesses and injuries, in the United
24 States;

1 (C) provides a comprehensive and detailed
2 description of the programs and services of the
3 Federal Government in meeting the needs and
4 problems described in subparagraph (B);

5 (D) describes the activities and accomplish-
6 ments of the Council in working with Federal,
7 State, and local governments, nonprofit organi-
8 zations and for-profit entities in coordinating
9 programs and services to meet the needs de-
10 scribed in subparagraph (B) and the resources
11 available to meet those needs;

12 (E) assesses the level of Federal assistance
13 required to meet the needs described in sub-
14 paragraph (B); and

15 (F) makes recommendations for appro-
16 priate legislative and administrative actions to
17 meet the needs described in subparagraph (B)
18 and for coordinating programs and services de-
19 signed to meet those needs.

20 **SEC. 6. POWERS OF THE COUNCIL.**

21 (a) HEARINGS.—The Council may hold such hear-
22 ings, sit and act at such times and places, take such testi-
23 mony, and receive such evidence as the Council considers
24 advisable to carry out the purposes of this Act.

1 (b) INFORMATION FROM AGENCIES.—Agencies which
2 are represented on the Council shall provide all requested
3 information and data to the Council as requested.

4 (c) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Council may use the
5 United States mails in the same manner and under the
6 same conditions as other departments and agencies of the
7 Federal Government.

8 (d) GIFTS.—

9 (1) The Council may accept, use, and dispose of
10 gifts or donations of services or property.

11 (2) The Council shall adopt internal regulations
12 governing the receipt of gifts or donations of services
13 or property similar to those described in part 2601
14 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations.

15 (e) CONTRACTS AND INTERAGENCY AGREEMENTS.—
16 The Council may enter into contracts with State, Tribal,
17 and local governments, public agencies and private-sector
18 entities, and into interagency agreements with Federal
19 agencies. Such contracts and interagency agreements may
20 be single-year or multi-year in duration.

21 **SEC. 7. COUNCIL PERSONNEL MATTERS.**

22 (a) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—

23 (1) NON-FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.—A member of
24 the Council who is not an officer or employee of the
25 Federal Government shall be reasonably com-

1 compensated for that member's participation in the
2 Council, including reimbursement for travel expenses
3 as described in subsection (b).

4 (2) FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.—A member of the
5 Council who is an officer or employee of the United
6 States shall serve without compensation in addition
7 to the compensation received for services of the
8 member as an officer or employee of the Federal
9 Government.

10 (b) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—The members of the Coun-
11 cil shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in
12 lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of
13 agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5,
14 United States Code, while away from their homes or reg-
15 ular places of business in the performance of services for
16 the Council.

17 (c) STAFF.—

18 (1) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—The Council shall
19 appoint an Executive Director at its initial meeting.
20 The Executive Director shall be compensated at a
21 rate not to exceed the rate of pay payable for level
22 V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of
23 title 5, United States Code.

24 (2) COMPENSATION.—With the approval of the
25 Council, the Executive Director may appoint and fix

1 the compensation of such additional personnel as
2 necessary to carry out the duties of the Council. The
3 rate of compensation may be set without regard to
4 the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter II of
5 chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code, relating
6 to classification of positions and General Schedule
7 pay rates, except that the rate of pay may not ex-
8 ceed the rate payable for level V of the Executive
9 Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

10 (d) TEMPORARY AND INTERMITTENT SERVICES.—In
11 carrying out its objectives, the Council may procure tem-
12 porary and intermittent services of consultants and ex-
13 perts under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code,
14 at rates for individuals which do not exceed the daily
15 equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for
16 level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of
17 such title.

18 (e) DETAIL OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.—Upon
19 request of the Council, any Federal Government employee
20 may be detailed to the Council without reimbursement,
21 and such detail shall be without interruption or loss of
22 civil service status or privilege.

23 (f) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.—The Secretary of
24 Housing and Urban Development shall provide the Coun-
25 cil with such administrative (including office space) and

1 supportive services as are necessary to ensure that the
2 Council can carry out its functions.

3 **SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appro-
5 priated to carry out this Act, \$750,000 for each of fiscal
6 years 2009 through 2013.

7 (b) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts authorized to be appro-
8 priated by subsection (a) shall remain available for the 2
9 fiscal years following such appropriation.

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