

HOME OWNERSHIP EXPANSION
AND OPPORTUNITIES**HON. RUBÉN HINOJOSA**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2001

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express concerns over the introduction of H.R. 3206, the Home Ownership Expansion and Opportunities Act of 2001. The legislation would allow Ginnie Mae to alter its current role from guaranteeing federally backed mortgage securities to guaranteeing federal and conventional mortgage securities. In short, this legislation transforms this entity into a full functioning Government Sponsored Enterprise.

While I am not necessarily opposed to the creation of an additional Government Sponsored Enterprise, I am opposed to the creation of an entity that draws from Federal capital and is not subject to government guidelines and goals geared toward increasing home ownership and improving the American economy.

This legislation would allow Ginnie Mae to operate with equal flexibility and larger security than current Government Sponsored Enterprises in the housing mortgage market, including Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. However, it would not require that Ginnie Mae meet the housing goals established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. These goals are designed to ensure that every American can and one day will be able to achieve the dream of home ownership.

Therefore, it is unclear how this legislation would help consumers or expand homeownership opportunities for minorities, low- to moderate-income families, and other traditionally underserved markets. The legislation that expands the role and scope of Ginnie Mae does not make them subject to mandatory affordable housing goals, borrower income caps, or limit their business to first time buyers. These ideals have made organizations like Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac an attractive and worthy government sponsored enterprise and prompted them to create new ways to expand the number of first-time borrowers or break down barriers to homeownership.

What this legislation does is make this government entity function like a private corporation, allowing Ginnie Mae to guarantee loans not just to people who need the extra help, but also to those who can and should be using the private market. Under these rules, I see no need to provide federal support for an organization that will perform a function in the housing market that can be executed by a private banking organization.

Mr. Speaker, our nation's housing finance system is the model of the world. We should be concentrating our resources, time and effort in closing the gap of homeownership rates between minority families and the larger homeownership rate. We have the tools necessary to improve ownership numbers; let's use what we have to successfully meet our laudable goals.

RESIST A BILL WITH TAX CUTS
THAT WOULD DRAIN THE SUR-
PLUS**HON. JOHN M. SPRATT, JR.**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2001

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, a year ago, economists surveyed the future and saw nothing but surpluses: \$5.6 trillion over the next ten years. Today, the ten-year surplus is at \$2.6 trillion and falling, and virtually all that's left comes from Social Security. When the President submits next year's budget, an updated economic forecast will come with it, and the surplus will officially shrink again.

The Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Mitchell Daniels, blames the economy, extra spending, the fight against terrorism—everything but tax cuts. All of these have an impact, but over ten years, the Bush tax cuts take a toll of \$1.7 trillion on the budget, and account for 55% of the depletion in the surplus—and this is just the toll of tax cuts already passed. Marking time is a little-noticed agenda of highly probable, politically compelling tax cuts that could wipe out much of the remaining surplus.

At the top of this agenda, awaiting a fix, is the alternative minimum tax (AMT). Last year only 1.5 million individual taxpayers had to deal with the AMT, but due to inflation, rising incomes, and an unindexed exemption, the AMT will become a household acronym to millions of middle-income Americans.

Before enactment of the Bush tax cuts, the number of individual taxpayers affected by the AMT was expected to mushroom to 17.5 million by 2010. The Bush tax act created new tax benefits without corresponding adjustments to the AMT, at least not after 2004. As a result, the number of taxpayers affected by the AMT will double by 2010, grow to 35.5 million—or to one in every three individual taxpayers. When these folks find that tax benefits are extended in one part of the code only to be retracted in another, they will protest bitterly, and in time Congress is certain to fix the AMT so that it does not come down on middle-income taxpayers. The cost of confining the AMT to its ambit before the Bush tax cuts would be about \$268 billion over 2003–12. But this would leave more than 17 million taxpayers facing the AMT. If taxable income exempt from the AMT were indexed at last year's level, those affected in 2010 could be limited to about 8 million, but at a heavy cost, a further revenue loss of \$241 billion.

Just as probable as some fix to the AMT is the renewal of tax benefits set to expire. The tax code is full of short-lived benefits. CBO and OMB do not try to divine what Congress will do when these deductions and credits reach the end of their legislated lives. They simply assume that expiring provisions will not be renewed. But these are popular tax benefits, and they are almost always renewed. The revenues forgone by renewing the most prominent tax benefits from 2003 through 2012 would be about \$174 billion.

This, however, omits the largest expiring provision. In an effort to shoehorn as many tax cuts as possible into a package limited to \$1.35 trillion, congressional Republicans put a "sunset" in their tax bill, terminating all of the cuts by the end of 2010. They obviously do

not intend for the sun to set on their tax cuts. They stuck in a "repealer" to diminish the apparent size of the tax bill, knowing that Congress will be hard-pressed to repeal tax cuts already in place. In time, the "repealer" itself will probably be repealed. If so, the revenue loss will be \$373 billion over 2003–2012.

When each of these actions is taken into account, an additional \$1 trillion in revenue losses has to be deducted from the budget between 2003 and 2012, along with an additional \$143 billion in debt service. The impact on the budget, all told, comes to \$1.2 trillion.

This dashes any hope that the nation can repay its publicly held debt before the baby boomers retire. It also puts the "stimulus package" in context. Disdaining the vanishing surplus and the agenda of tax cuts to come, Republicans on the Ways and Means Committee brought forth a stimulus package full of tax cuts with doubtful effects on the economy, but with a clear impact on the surplus, reducing it by \$250 billion over the next ten years. If this bill became law, it would push the overall price of the pending tax-cut agenda to almost \$3.5 trillion and wipe out what remains of the surplus.

The projection of ten-year surpluses soaring toward \$6 trillion left in its wake a sense of euphoria, a feeling that we could have it all. It's clear now that we can't, but in the meantime, out-sized tax cuts have overridden other priorities, like prescription drug coverage under Medicare. If we want to put the economy and the budget back on path, there is an axiom worth recalling from the days of intractable deficits: When you find yourself in a hole, the first rule is to quit digging. That's why we should resist a bill with tax cuts that would drain the surplus without stimulating the economy.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MIKE McINTYRE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2001

Mr. McINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall Nos. 499 and 500, I was absent since I was unavoidably detained because of a security breach at the Charlotte Douglas Airport, which caused me to be unexpectedly re-routed through another airport on a later flight.

This occurred on Tuesday, December 18, 2001. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

COMMENDING THE CANTON JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL'S SEPTEMBER 11 REMEMBRANCE PROGRAM

HON. NANCY L. JOHNSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2001

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the students and faculty at Canton Junior/Senior High School in Connecticut's Sixth Congressional District for their beautifully touching remembrance program held in honor of the victims of the September 11th terrorist attacks.

The students took the initiative to plan and run the entire program, in which stories, poems and songs were shared, honoring those who so unexpectedly and tragically lost their lives. They also created a chain of 6,000 circles, which was looped around the auditorium, to provide a dramatic reminder of the number of people who were thought to have died on that terrible day. The chain captured both the enormity of the tragedy and the value of each individual life. But ever optimistic, the chain, as one student eloquently said, was a reminder that after the attacks, "the great chain of America—the chain that links every single citizen of our country—strengthened ten thousand fold."

That vital and heartfelt presentation captured the spirit of America's journey as we watched the unfolding events in horror and disbelief and then as we grieved with great sorrow at the lives and dreams shattered by evil. Despite the anger and hatred that has touched all our hearts, these students demonstrated the power of love for others. It is that power that will make our free and caring country able to defeat the hatred of those whose poverty made them easy prey for the preachers of death and destruction.

I commend the students of Canton Junior/Senior High for expressing in words and actions the thoughts and feelings of Americans everywhere.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

(Patriotic Paper by Lauren Schwartzman)

September 11th. Do you feel what I feel when you hear that date? Can you feel the death in that date? The tears cried by three hundred million eyes for six thousand people. People whose lives were so brutally, so cruelly cut short that day. We are crying for those dreams shattered and lost, dreams of life that will never be fulfilled.

Can you feel the hatred in that date? The awful, black hate these terrorists must feel toward us to have done such unbelievable things.

Can you feel the shock in that date? The shock of a fact we have ignored for so long. That fact that maybe we are taking the safety of America for granted. That maybe taking it for granted has left it not so safe anymore. The shock that made every American's heart skip several beats, the shock that branded a look of sadness on our faces. Traces of that helpless look still linger, and it will be a long, long time before they completely fade away.

Can you feel the anger in that date? The acid fire that was lit in our hearts the moment we knew the names of those inhuman people who attacked our country. The same fire that kindles our attacks on these terrorists now. This fire will also take a long time to turn to cold ashes. But can you also feel that other little bit I feel in that date? Can you feel in that date the great chain of America, the chain that links every single citizen of our country, strengthen ten thousand fold? Can you feel that? Through all of the death and tears and hate and shock, can you feel that bit of unity and hope shining through? That light that embodies America better than any two buildings ever could. An untouchable flame that cannot be doused by hate or death or any mere person! For I look at America as a candle. Some people call it the fabric, or the foundation, but I call it the candle. A candle built by the courage of Americans, expanded by the courage of Americans, protected by the courage of Americans, made free by the courage of Americans, and now we must do whatever it takes to protect that freedom. We must keep

the flame that was lit so long ago burning bright and true. For if we keep on pouring our heart and soul into our songs, prayers, and actions, then there is nothing and no one that can ever douse the flame.

AS ONE WHOLE

(By Robin Engelke, Grade 8, Canton Junior High School)

As one whole,
we share one soul.
We all pray and hope,
As a nation we cope.
Tragedies don't always bring bad,
Look back to the one's we've already had.

"Always for the best." I say
All I can think about is that day.
The one where the towers fell,
That day felt as if we went to hell.

As one whole,
the tragedy was a form of defeat,
but not for America we hadn't been beat.

As everyone fumbled to find a loved one
In New York City there was no sun.

No sun to shine or gleam or burn,
Those fires did burn, but who did this to us
will take their turn.

As one whole,
we share one soul

REFLECTION

(By Louise Eich)

September 11th, 2001 was a day when the clock stood still. Loved ones ran to each other, crying, embracing as the ground shook from the buildings crumbling. Firefighters and police officers showed braveness needed in a war, to fight and die for other's happiness. The black scorched their helmets, made their throats dry and itchy, but they marched on.

Everything stopped at that moment again, as they watched the second tower fall. Silence struck the air, and the first scream and siren pierced through the stillness.

The country went through a breakdown, a cry for help as everything turned to chaos. Planes were brought down, schools canceled, as the city of New York shut down.

But America stayed strong. We stepped right back up. New York has been opened up again, our flags wave high, and we promised to fight the evil that possessed the planes to crash on us.

We will stand strong, America. We will rebuild a nation of togetherness, and we will come out victorious. They can destroy our towers, but they can never destroy the foundations of our hearts.

IN TRIBUTE TO CLARENE LINCOLN ROBERTSON

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2001

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, many of us in the U.S. House of Representatives have had our lives enriched and our spirits strengthened through the work of Rev. Doug Tanner, President of the Faith & Politics Institute. His teacher and mentor, Clarene Lincoln Robertson taught American History to Doug at Rutherfordton-Spindale Central High School in North Carolina in 1962–1963. Doug Tanner was one of the students whose life and vocation she profoundly influenced. I rise today to pay tribute to Clarene Lincoln Robertson who will be 100 years old on January 11, 2002.

Clarene Lincoln and her twin brother were born in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, near the town of Tenth Legion on January 11, 1902. Clarene rode horseback to elementary school and went by sleigh in the winter. When she entered high school, she went to live during the week in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and came home on the weekends. She graduated from Elon College in North Carolina in 1925.

After teaching at Huntington Girls' College in Montgomery, Alabama, she went to Duke University for a Master's Degree and met W.B. Robertson. Their summer romance has lasted 65 years. They married in 1936 and moved to Rutherfordton, North Carolina, where Clarene began her 30-year teaching career at Central High School. She initially taught both English and American History, but she moved to history only when one of her students said, "Oh, Mrs. Robertson, you learned me all the English I ever knowed."

Mrs. Robertson gave birth to her only natural child, daughter Mary Ella in January 1938. Arthur, her stepson from Mr. Robertson's previous marriage, died at age 65. Clarene and "Robby" have five grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. Only a year or so ago, they moved from Rutherfordton to Blanco, Texas, where they live with Mary Ella and her husband David.

Clarene Robertson taught high school American History like a college course. Some students opted to take the required course in summer school to avoid the rigor of her class. Others—some willingly, some reluctantly—submitted to her demanding academic standards. Those students often completed the course with both a deeper knowledge of and appreciation for our Nation's history and an eagerness to follow current events and engage in civic and political life.

Doug Tanner graduated from high school in 1964, having taken her history class in 1962–1963. Both he and Mrs. Robertson recall that Doug entered the class reflecting and embracing the strong racial prejudice typical of white Southerners at the time. Clarene Robertson was not about to let him continue to carry that attitude without her having challenged it as thoroughly and effectively as she possibly could.

The civil rights movement was nearing its height in the spring of 1963, and current events were a regular part of the curriculum. In addition, Mrs. Robertson required Doug to read John Howard Griffin's "Black Like Me" and, in spite of resistance, assigned him to a select group of students to make a presentation on African-American history to the rest of the class. Although several other students readily volunteered for the project, Mrs. Robertson assigned some of them to other topics. She insisted that Doug be among those who would learn and wrestle with all the issues of race in America. Mrs. Robertson also served as advisor to the student government, and worked closely with Doug in his capacity as junior class president.

The following summer, when the civil rights movement touched Doug's heart more directly through experiences in his southeastern Methodist Youth Fellowship, his mind was prepared to embrace the monumental change that racial desegregation was bringing throughout the South. It was in that notable historical context that Doug received his calling into a ministry combining faith, racial justice, and politics.

Today, Clarene Robertson's influence on Doug has helped him to lead the Institute's