

SECTION 8 HOUSING FLEXIBLE
VOUCHER PROPOSAL**HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2004

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the administration's proposed restructuring of the Section 8 Housing Program, particularly in regard to the block grant funding proposal, which is especially important to low-income men and women in my home state of New Jersey.

The Section 8 Housing Program currently assists two million individuals including elderly citizens, persons with disabilities, and low-income working families to meet their housing needs. The proposed Section 8 restructuring will leave states and local public housing authorities starved of the necessary financial resources they need to keep up with the demand for housing. Local housing authorities will be forced to either substantially raise rent or cut the number of vouchers distributed, severely hampering the program's effectiveness in helping Americans afford a safe and secure place to live.

Nationally, the Congressional Budget Office recently estimated that proposed changes to the Section 8 Housing Program will lead to the elimination of 600,000 vouchers by 2009, which equals thirty percent of all vouchers now in use. In 2005 alone an estimated 250,000 families could lose their housing assistance, including 7,181 families in New Jersey. For example, in Fiscal Year 2005, the Jersey City Housing Authority, located in my district, will face an expected \$3,117,611 in funding reductions resulting in an estimated cut of 351 currently assisted families. The Housing Authority of Bergen County, also located within my district, expects a funding cut of \$4,056,468, resulting in 434 families currently receiving assistance to lose their vouchers.

While losses such as these could be devastating to many families, several of my colleagues have argued the proposed restructuring is necessary in part to counteract escalating costs of the Section 8 Housing Program. Indeed, the cost of the Section 8 voucher program has increased, but these increases have been reasonable, legislatively driven, and impermanent. Over half of the growth in cost has resulted from Congressional decisions to increase the number of families the Section 8 Housing Program assists, often as a result of ending other federal public housing initiatives. Another 37 percent of the growth has resulted from an increasing gap between housing costs and the earnings of low-income families. In addition, the program has expanded because of efforts to improve its efficiency; the share of authorized vouchers rose from 90.5 to 96 percent between 2001 and 2003. Cutting the funding would, therefore, punish the program for more effectively achieving its objectives. Furthermore, the actual Section 8 Housing Program costs have risen at a low annual rate of only four percent, and the Congressional Budget Office expects future growth to slow markedly due to the cooling of the housing market, with an expected small 1.8 percent growth in fiscal year 2005.

Studies have shown that a large percentage of low-income families and individuals spend

more than half of their income on housing, severely inhibiting their ability to meet other basic needs. Affordable housing is the foundation of economic self sufficiency, the loss of which is a barrier to employment that affects children, families, and entire communities. Cutting housing funding and reducing opportunities for American families to live in safe housing, will directly correlate with escalating costs in federal spending for welfare, crime, health, and homelessness in the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that we guarantee the Section 8 Housing Program an adequate level of funding by rejecting the administration's proposal. I hope that my colleagues will join me in taking preemptive action against escalating financial and social costs in the future by providing stable housing for our working poor today.

STATEMENT HONORING PFC. JOHN
S. AMOS II**HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2004

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and honor that I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding American, a true patriot, and a hero to his country, Army Pfc. John D. Amos II. Pfc. Amos died Sunday, April 4, 2004 while bravely serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom for the Army's 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division (Light), Schofield Barracks. He bravely sacrificed his life to ensure the safety of his fellow soldiers, the Iraqi people, and the very idea of freedom throughout the world.

Pfc. John Amos' unit was sent to the Tamin area of Kirkuk to set up a vehicle inspection point near the police academy. When his unit arrived, residents were conducting a demonstration in the streets surrounding the academy. With the streets cluttered by protesters, Amos' unit began inspecting vehicles and groups of people before they moved through the crowd. Amos was walking in a line of six soldiers when a car attempting to clear the checkpoint exploded. Pfc. Amos was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

Pfc. Amos, a native of Griffith, Indiana, graduated from Valparaiso High School in 2002. Throughout his life, John always had the urge to protect his fellow man. In September 2001, John witnessed a fatal car accident. He tried to help the victim, called 911 and waited for help to arrive. The victim didn't make it and it affected John deeply. It's one of the reasons that prompted him to join the U.S. Army. After the terrorist attacks in 2001, John felt especially compelled to defend the United States.

John Amos is survived by his mother, Susan Amos, his father, John Amos, his sister, Rebecca Amos, two half-brothers, Hunter and Tyler Amos, his grandfather Hank Amos, and grandparents Doug and Lucy Whitehead. John's spirit and compassion will never be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring the memory of Pfc. John Amos, and in sending our heartfelt condolences to his

family. John is a hero, not only to his family and friends, but also to Northwest Indiana and to the United States of America. He fought bravely for the ideals of freedom, truth, and liberty, and as our nation mourns his loss, let us honor his life and his dedication to the service of his country.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF BROWN v.
BOARD OF EDUCATION**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2004

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of the historical Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* of May 17, 1954. The struggle against racial discrimination did not end with this decision nor has it ended today. Racial segregation in public places like restaurants and buses was still legal after 1954 and the *Brown II* decision of May 31, 1955 was a step backwards by allowing Southern district courts to integrate public schools "with all deliberate speed." But by declaring the segregation of public schools unconstitutional, the Supreme Court took a first step towards making the United States a society that lived up to its ideals of social equality, democracy and freedom.

The future of every country depends to a large extent on its children. Social values are conveyed to our youngest generation mainly by their parents, but also by their schools. Racial hatred and intolerance are products of a lack of knowledge and the fear of the unknown. Only schools that are racially mixed will increase children's understanding of each other, of other cultures and backgrounds. But today our country is drifting into the wrong direction. Our schools are more racially intermixed than in 1954 but less than in 1968, when our great national leader Martin Luther King was assassinated. While 43 percent of all black youngsters attended predominantly white schools in 1988, this figure has fallen to only 30 percent today. And Hispanic students are even more segregated than African Americans. My home state New York is among the most segregated states in the country and my district is particularly hardly hit. Minority students in my district still attend schools that perform worse than predominantly white schools.

While we should celebrate the historical event of the 1954 Supreme Court decision, let us keep in mind that racial discrimination and social inequality still exist in our country. Our education system still does not offer equal opportunities to all young people. Many schools are chronically underfunded. Let us celebrate the achievements of the civil rights movement in the past, but not forget that the biggest challenges still lie ahead.

MEMORIAL DAY

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2004

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, shortly, we will be celebrating Memorial Day, a sacred

time of remembrance where we pay tribute to the brave men and women who have sacrificed their lives to protect the freedoms we hold so very dear.

I believe that it is especially fitting at this time to share a poem written by my constituent, Mr. Cordell A. Dickey of Roanoke, Virginia. Mr. Dickey is a veteran of World War II where his unit was part of the division that invaded Guadalcanal on August 8, 1942. The poem was written in the Southwest Pacific in 1943 to honor a fallen friend, Hiram DiAlfordi, who was killed in New Caledonia in 1942.

The commemoration of Memorial Day will likely be a trying time filled with vivid memories of the son or daughter, husband or wife, mom or dad who will never come home. It is the hope of Mr. Dickey that his poem will bring comfort to the family of those who sacrificed for a cause greater than one's self.

LOST VIGILANCE

(By Cordell A. Dickey)

Twas here I stepped, here I fell, and here
On this far, unfriendly shore,
A dream was lost and shattered forever:
Leaving only fragments scattered on the
sands.

To you who loved my life:
Whose heart knew pain when earth's cold
bosom

Embraced and held me fast;
I would not have you grieve too much!
Sing no more sad songs for me . . .
Wipe away your last falling tear.
For when I quietly slipped into the void,
To keep with destiny my final rendezvous;
I did not fear to face Infinity,
Or plunge into a dark abyss.

To you who still have life:
Whose shattered spirit needs a healing balm
To make you whole again;
I would that you should know much joy;
Find new faith and hope again!

This above all:
Learn to laugh and sing again . . .
The world is filled with beauty.

COSPONSORSHIP OF HOMEOWNER- SHIP TAX CREDIT LEGISLATION

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2004

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, the low-income housing tax credit created by Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code, commonly known as the rental credit, is responsible for the production of more than one million affordable housing units valued at over \$100 billion since 1987. Because of its tremendous success, the Bush administration and a bipartisan group of Members have proposed the creation of a new credit modeled on the rental credit and targeted at creating affordable housing for purchase by low- and moderate-income families. Concerns have been raised, however, that a homeownership credit, not properly crafted, could have unintended, negative consequences on the highly successful rental credit and on the very low-income Americans who benefit from the housing produced by it.

Until today, these concerns have led me to withhold my support from H.R. 839, the "Renewing the Dream Tax Credit Act," which was introduced early last year by the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. PORTMAN and the gentleman from Maryland, Mr. CARDIN. I have decided,

however, that despite my continued reservations, I will add my name as a cosponsor today because the goal of increasing affordable homeownership opportunities is one I strongly support and a well-developed tax incentive could play an important part in that effort. Of course, I will work to ensure that the matters detailed below are considered carefully as the bill moves forward in Congress.

My prime concern is that the legislation when enacted not adversely affect the existing rental credit. How might this happen? Put simply, in the event that rental credits are less attractive than homeownership credits to equity investors, pricing for rental credits may fall and the program may be less effective in meeting the demand for high quality, affordable housing.

In addition, it is worth emphasizing that the affordable homeownership tax credit should be utilized in communities where a new subsidy is clearly needed to enable homeownership. In some parts of the country, the supply of new subsidized homes resulting from the credit's creation may endanger the economics of existing multifamily rental properties and cause the value of homes presently owned by low- and moderate-income households—the successful result of current affordable housing programs—to fall. We must be exceptionally wary of this possibility.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, despite the reservations I have raised that deserve continued analysis and deliberation, I am pleased today to add my name as a cosponsor of H.R. 839. Increasing affordable homeownership opportunities for my constituents and families across America has long been a top priority for me and this proposal can certainly help us work toward that goal.

UNDOCUMENTED ALIEN EMERGENCY MEDICAL ASSISTANCE AMENDMENTS OF 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. WALLY HERGER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 17, 2004

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, while I inadvertently missed the final vote on H.R. 3722, Roll Call Vote #182, I would have voted in favor of the resolution.

The Medicare and Prescription Drug Reform bill last year appropriated \$1 billion over four years to pay state and local health facilities for the costs they incur in treating illegal aliens. Without denying health care to anyone appearing in the emergency room for treatment, H.R. 3722 would have required that local hospitals turn over information to the Department of Homeland Security about the illegal aliens they treat, as a condition of being reimbursed under the new program.

If hospitals chose not to do so, they would still be free to continue treating undocumented aliens. They simply wouldn't receive payment for these services.

Although H.R. 3722 was not approved, as a member of the House Immigration Reform Caucus, I will continue to work with others in Congress toward meaningful solutions to curb the trend of illegal migration to the United States.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT L. HABUSH

HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2004

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend congratulations to Robert L. Habush. On May 24, 2004, the Milwaukee Chapter of the American Jewish Committee will bestow upon Mr. Habush the 2004 Community Service Human Relations Award at the Pfister Hotel. The Community Service Human Relations Award honors individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service and leadership. Mr. Habush has shown through his significant contributions to Wisconsin and the law that he is richly deserving of this award.

As anyone in Wisconsin can tell you, Mr. Habush has achieved a high level of professional success. He has practiced law for forty two years as a litigator, principally for plaintiffs, and over the years has been involved in some of the most significant cases in Wisconsin, as well as the development of the law. His law firm, Habush Habush & Rotter S.C., is well known in Wisconsin with its ten offices throughout the state.

Mr. Habush is widely admired for his philanthropy, including his strong commitment to the two law schools in Wisconsin. He has established the Robert L. Habush Bascom Professorship in Trial Advocacy and the Robert L. Habush Moot Court Advocacy Fund at the University of Wisconsin Law School. At Marquette Law School, he has funded a scholarship and a gift to create the Howard Eisenberg Memorial Hall.

Mr. Habush has also been honored by serving as President of the Wisconsin Academy of Trial Lawyers and President of The Association of Trial Lawyers of America. In 2001, he was named by the National Law Journal as one of the top ten litigators in the United States. In 2002, he received The Association of Trial Lawyers of America's highest award, The Champion of Justice. Mr. Habush has also been named as one of the top Wisconsin leaders in the law, by the Wisconsin Law Review. In honor of Mr. Habush's esteemed work, The Wisconsin Academy of Trial Lawyers has named its Trial Lawyer of the Year award after him, as well as The Association of Trial Lawyers of America naming their endowment in his honor.

Today, I join the Milwaukee Chapter of the American Jewish Committee in offering my sincere congratulations for receiving the 2004 Community Service Human Relations Award. Robert Habush is one of Wisconsin's best and I am proud to recognize him today.

TRIBUTE TO BOB ERICKSON

HON. JOHN KLINE

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2004

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend and neighbor, Bob Erickson, and to recognize him on the occasion of his retirement from the position of City Administrator for the city of Lakeville, Minnesota.

Over the past 44 years, Bob Erickson has compiled a distinguished record of public service. He has been honored by such groups as