

The victims' right movement has come a long way. The days when a victim was just a mere witness in the courthouse are not far gone.

While we are always sure to safeguard the rights of defendants, our justice system must also safeguard the rights of victims of crime.

The victims' rights movement dates all the way back to 1965 when the first crime victim compensation program was started in the State of California. Five States enacted similar legislation by 1970, and then we saw that organization, what we call the MADD mothers, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, come into being to advocate on behalf of victims of crime who had been hurt by those people who drink and drive.

In 1975, activists across the country united and formed the National Organization for Victim Assistance to expand victim services and promote the rights of victims.

In 1978, three more important organizations started: the National Coalition Against Sexual Assault, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and a group of somber individuals called Parents of Murdered Children, all of them advocating on behalf of crime victims.

President Reagan in 1981 proclaimed the first National Victims' Rights Week in April, and that was also the year that 6-year-old Adam Walsh was abducted from a department store and later murdered, prompting a national campaign to educate the public on missing children and to pass better legislation—Federal legislation, to protect our greatest natural resource, the young that live among us.

In 1982, the Federal Government created the Office for Victims of Crime, or OVC, within the Department of Justice, a tremendous organization that sees after the victims of crime in our country.

Then, in 1984, the Congress passed the Victims of Crime Act, what we call VOCA, one of the most novel concepts that Congress has ever adopted. What it does is require that people convicted in Federal courts, those defendants, once they are convicted, they pay moneys into a fund, and that fund is used to help crime victims throughout the United States. It is a tremendous idea, making defendants pay for the system they have created, pay the rent on a courthouse as I like to call it. And today, Madam Speaker, that fund is over \$1.7 billion, contributed not by taxpayers but by offenders, that goes for the specific purpose of helping victims, helping victims' organizations like rape centers, domestic violence shelters, and victim advocates that help victims throughout the turmoil of being a crime victim.

In 2005, my first year in Congress, I was honored to form the Victims' Rights Caucus with the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA), who was a long-time victims' advocate in the State of California before he ever came to Congress. And this bipartisan, but

yet nonpartisan, caucus now has 44 members, and we do everything we can to raise the awareness of crime victims here in the Federal Government.

In 2006, 25 years after Adam Walsh's murder that I just mentioned earlier, President Bush signed the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act, which requires sex offenders and child molesters, once they leave the Federal penitentiary or State penitentiaries, to register on the national database so that we keep up with those people who wish to prey on our communities.

Madam Speaker, crime victims don't have a lobbyist up here in Washington. They don't have some high-dollar lobbyist to work for them and advocate on their behalf. But we are their lobbyists. We advocate on behalf of all crime victims because that's what we do here in Congress, to take and protect the best that we have among us, and that's crime victims.

I urge community leaders and organizations to celebrate how far the victims' rights movement has come but also to continue to recognize the importance of crime victims that live among us because, Madam Speaker, justice is the one thing we should always find, and hopefully crime victims can find justice at the courthouse in our day and time.

And that's just the way it is.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I wonder if the gentleman from Ohio has additional speakers.

Mr. CHABOT. We have no additional speakers, and we would be happy to yield back our time.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to support this resolution. It's bipartisan. It's important.

I just recalled, as I was listening to both Mr. POE and Mr. COSTA taking the lead and I thank them both for that, my more than 10 years on the Victim Witness Assistance Board, when I was in local government, and the tremendous need there is for people who have been victims and then who are also witnesses to receive the assistance from society that they need so much.

So I appreciate the efforts of both gentlemen and our colleagues who are in this caucus and urge support.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ZOE LOFGREN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1053.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMMEMORATING THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE FAIR HOUSING ACT

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to

the resolution (H. Res. 1095) recognizing and honoring the 40th anniversary of congressional passage of title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (the Fair Housing Act) and the 20th anniversary of the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1095

Whereas April 11, 2008, marks the 40th anniversary of congressional passage of the Fair Housing Act;

Whereas September 13, 2008, marks the 20th anniversary of congressional passage of the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988;

Whereas the Chicago Freedom Movement, led by the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr., expanded the fight for civil rights from the South to the North, raised the national consciousness about housing discrimination, and shaped the debate that led to the landmark fair housing legislation, the Fair Housing Act;

Whereas the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson and commonly known as the Kerner Commission, found in 1968 that "[o]ur nation is moving toward two societies, one black and one white—separate and unequal";

Whereas Congress passed the Fair Housing Act as part of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, and President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Act into law on April 11, 1968, one week after the assassination of the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr.;

Whereas the Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing and housing-related transactions on the basis of race, color, national origin, and religion;

Whereas in section 808 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, Congress amended the Fair Housing Act to include protection on the basis of sex;

Whereas the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988, passed by overwhelming margins in Congress, included protection on the basis of familial status and disability, created an important enforcement mechanism, and expanded the definition of "discriminatory housing practices" to include interference and intimidation, requiring the Department of Housing and Urban Development to issue regulations to implement and interpret the Fair Housing Act and report annually to Congress on the nature and extent of housing discrimination;

Whereas the intent of Congress in passing the Fair Housing Act was broad and inclusive, to advance equal opportunity in housing and achieve racial integration for the benefit of all people in the United States;

Whereas housing integration affects educational attainment, employment opportunities, access to health care, and home equity;

Whereas the majority of Americans support neighborhood integration, and numerous studies have shown the universal benefits of residential integration;

Whereas more than 4,000,000 violations of fair housing laws still occur each year against people of all protected classes, and testing of the enforcement of fair housing laws continues to uncover a high rate of discrimination in the rental, sales, mortgage lending, and insurance markets;

Whereas less than 1 percent of violations of fair housing laws are reported each year;

Whereas fair housing centers funded by Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP) are the frontline in the effort to resolve housing discrimination;

Whereas in 2006, approximately 27,000 housing discrimination complaints were filed, of which 18,000 complaints were resolved by fair housing centers;

Whereas the Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP) funds fair housing grants annually on a non-competitive basis to State and local fair housing enforcement agencies which are used for complaint processing, administrative costs, special enforcement efforts, training and other projects designed to enhance the agency's administration and enforcement of its fair housing law;

Whereas fair housing education and enforcement play a pivotal role in increasing housing choice and minority homeownership and combating predatory lending; and

Whereas the Fair Housing Act is an essential component of our Nation's civil rights legislation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes and honors the 40th anniversary of the enactment of the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.) and the 20th anniversary of the enactment of the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-430; 102 Stat. 1619);

(2) supports activities to recognize and celebrate the important historical milestones represented by the anniversaries of the enactment of the Fair Housing Act and the enactment of the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988; and

(3) encourages all people and levels of government to rededicate themselves to the enforcement and the ideals of fair housing laws.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

House Resolution 1095 recognizes the 40th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act, enacted as Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968.

On April 11, 1968, days after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the Fair Housing Act, which prohibits discrimination in housing based on race, color, religion or national origin. Twenty years later today, the law was expanded by the Fair Housing Amendments Act to include protections against discrimination based also on sexual orientation, familial status, and disability.

Many may not recall Dr. King's advocacy for fair housing, but he recognized the tremendous costs our society pays if patterns of segregated living continues, as it has.

While there is no question that the Fair Housing Act has become a power-

ful tool for advancing civil rights, there is much more to be done. For instance, most Americans still live in communities largely divided by race, according to the National Fair Housing Alliance.

An estimated 3.7 million people are discriminated against in housing transactions every single year. This number doesn't even include instances of discrimination against persons with disabilities, nor does it reflect discriminatory lending in insurance practices, planning and zoning, or other forms of profiling. We have so much more to do.

Enforcement is a key area where we need further improvement. For example, while 27,000 complaints of housing discrimination were filed with the Federal Government last year, Housing and Urban Development issued 31 charges, and the Justice Department filed 35 cases.

Landlords, real estate agents, lenders, insurance agents, and others know they face limited risk of prosecution for discrimination. Even those who are prosecuted often pay such a minor penalty that discrimination today becomes just another cost of doing business. It's no surprise that housing providers continue to discriminate and communities across our Nation sadly remain highly segregated.

The most recent manifestation of discrimination in housing is the current sub-prime foreclosure crisis, which presents some of the greatest fair housing and civil rights issues facing our Nation today. Fueled by reverse red-lining practices, the sub-prime foreclosure crisis is now causing extreme havoc for minority owners who were targeted for predatory home loans that stripped away their home equity and put their houses at risk of foreclosure. It's also affected financing markets all over the world.

If left unchecked, the foreclosure crisis threatens to wipe out many of the advances the country has made in the 40 years since the passage of the Fair Housing Act.

To be an effective tool in our fight against discrimination, the Fair Housing Act must be enforced, and we need to augment it with tough anti-predatory lending legislation, which is what I intend to do.

We should also enact legislation permitting bankruptcy judges to restructure home mortgages so deserving families can save their homes from foreclosure and, thereby, stem falling housing prices in communities all across our Nation.

After centuries of discrimination and denied opportunities, enactment of the Fair Housing Act 40 years ago marked a milestone in our Nation's efforts to achieve equal housing opportunities.

And so today, we celebrate the Fair Housing Act's 40th anniversary with, I hope, a renewed commitment to achieving and furthering its goals by supporting this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 1095, a resolution commemorating the 40th anniversary of the passage of the Fair Housing Act.

On April 4, 2008, just 11 days ago, this Nation joined together to pay tribute to the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and recognize his contributions to this Nation.

□ 1300

Thus, it's only fitting that we recognize one aspect of Dr. King's legacy, passage of the Fair Housing Act, which was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on April 11, 1968, just one week after Dr. King's tragic assassination.

The act, which prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental and financing of housing based on race, religion, national origin, sex, and later handicap and family status, was another tool to give meaning to the rights and protections afforded to all citizens by the Constitution.

Passage of the Fair Housing Act was a fitting memorial to Dr. King, as his name was closely associated with fair housing legislation since the 1966 "open housing" marches in Chicago.

At the same time, Senator Edward Brooke, the first African American ever to be elected to the Senate by popular vote, helped facilitate this Act's passage by describing his difficulties finding housing for his new family following his service in World War II.

The first official appointed to administer the act was former Governor George Romney. Secretary Romney assumed his position of Secretary of Housing and Urban Development after serving as Governor of Michigan, where he successfully campaigned for the ratification of a State constitutional amendment that prohibited discrimination in housing.

Since its enactment, the Fair Housing Act has prevented both countless instances of specific discrimination as well as broader patterns or practices of discrimination in housing programs. In addition, the act serves to punish those who attempt to disguise their discriminatory motives by giving false information to potential homebuyers, or by manipulating zoning codes. It prohibits sexual harassment in housing, and enables the disabled to more easily assimilate into our communities.

Madam Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't also commend and recognize the chairman of the Judiciary, Mr. CONYERS, both for his remarks, and also working with myself in a bipartisan manner on the issue that he raised about those that find themselves at risk of having their homes foreclosed upon. And I agree with him that we ought to give the bankruptcy judges additional powers to modify those particular agreements so that they can have a better chance of retaining their homes. That certainly would move forward those that find themselves at risk

of losing their own homes. Again, I want to thank the chairman of the committee for working with us in a bipartisan manner on that issue.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution today, and in celebrating the 40th anniversary of passage of the Fair Housing Act.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), the ranking member, for his great work on the matter.

And now I recognize the Reverend AL GREEN of Texas, the author of this idea, for 4 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. However, the promotion I cannot claim. I'm still a lowly Member of the House of Representatives, not yet made it to that lofty level of being a reverend, but you are very kind. And I thank you for the many years of work that you have dedicated to this very issue that we have on the floor today. In fact, it can be said that your great work has caused us to have this opportunity to be here today.

I also would like to thank the ranking member, LAMAR SMITH, for his work in helping us to bring this to the floor, and the manager of the time, Member STEVE CHABOT, for your services that you've rendered as well. And I appreciate especially the comments that you've made today.

In celebrating or commemorating or recognizing the 40th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act of 1968, we are, in truth, recognizing the efforts of Dr. Martin Luther King because it was Dr. Martin Luther King who went to Memphis some 40 years ago to help what we call sanitation workers today, but back then we called them garbage men.

Dr. King had a basic premise of trying to help somebody. And to him, these persons, although known as garbage men, they were somebody. And he went there to help them in their efforts to obtain equal justice. And while there, the unfortunate circumstance occurred, and we lost Dr. King prematurely. But I do believe that he did not live in vain.

There is a spiritual song styled, "If I can help somebody as I travel along, if I can help someone with a word or a song, if I can help someone from doing wrong, then my living shall not be in vain." Dr. King lived not in vain because this act, the Fair Housing Act, was passed after his demise. There are some historians who contend that it was his demise, in fact, that created the opportunity for it to pass as timely as it did.

And I am honored that Dr. King took up the cause of the lowly garbage men. However, 40 years later, there is still great work to be done, as has been indicated by the chairman, because 40 years later there are approximately four million acts of housing discrimination each year in this country. Forty years later, approximately 27,000 acts of housing discrimination and com-

plaints are filed annually. Forty years later, 13 fair housing groups have closed their doors due to a lack of funding. Forty years later, 26 fair housing centers, or one-quarter of all fair housing centers, have either closed their doors or are at risk of closing their doors due to a lack of funding.

Forty years later, 87 percent of African Americans, Latinos and Asian Americans meet with real estate agents and experience some form of steering. Steering occurs when the agent will send a person of one ethnicity to an area where persons of this ethnicity may be residing, whites to white neighborhoods, blacks to black neighborhoods, or neighborhoods that are going into some form of transition. Forty years later, 20 percent of the African Americans and Latinos trying to buy or rent homes have their cause ignored.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. CONYERS. I yield the gentleman 1 additional minute.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Less than 1 percent of housing discrimination acts are reported 40 years later.

So we need to do something to change this. We need to fully fund the fair housing programs. FHIP, the Fair Housing Initiative Program, should be fully funded to about \$52 million.

This program allows us to do what is known as testing, the means by which we acquired the empirical evidence that housing discrimination has actually occurred. There is no substitute for FHIP and the testing that takes place.

But also there is a piece of legislation, the Fair Housing Act of 2007, or H.R. 2926, which will give HUD some additional authority, will establish competitive grants, will help us to examine the causes of housing discrimination and talk about what we can do and, in fact, conclude what we can do to make remedies.

If we want to live not in vain as Dr. King did, let's help somebody. Let's do something about discrimination in housing and make real the great American ideal of owning a home.

Mr. CONYERS. I am pleased now to recognize a senior member of the House Judiciary Committee, MEL WATT, for as much time as he may consume. And I note that, although the gentleman from Texas is not a minister, we may all agree that he is a good preacher.

Mr. WATT. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 1095, the resolution recognizing the 40th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act.

The Fair Housing Act, title VIII of the Civil Rights Act, was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson in April of 1968, only 1 week after the assassination of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King.

This landmark act, the primary purpose of which is to prohibit discrimination in housing, introduced meaningful Federal enforcement mechanisms for buyers and renters. The Federal Hous-

ing Act initially prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion and national origin. Sex was subsequently added to the list of protected classes in 1974, and disability and family status were added in 1988.

Forty years later, in 2008, effective and meaningful enforcement of these fair housing laws continues to be critically important. It is essential that we continue to combat housing discrimination, which still exists today, not just by enacting laws, but by enforcing those that we have on the books already.

This is a meaningful piece of legislation, and I'm honored to pay tribute to the importance of it, but more importantly, to pay tribute and to recognize that enforcement continues to be a problem, and that discrimination in housing continues to exist.

With that, I thank the gentleman for the time.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased now to recognize the Honorable MAXINE WATERS of California for as much time as she may consume.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak in strong support of this resolution offered by my colleague, Mr. GREEN, from Houston commemorating the 40th anniversary of title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 and the 20th anniversary of the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988.

The history of the Fair Housing Act embodies both our Nation's most noble instincts and recent behavior by our Federal Government, which should make none of us proud.

On April 11, 1968, one week to the day after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Congress passed and the President signed into law the Federal Fair Housing Act which now prohibits discrimination in housing based on race, national origin, religion, color, sex, familial status and disability.

Acting on this legislation, which has been stalled in this body for over 2 years, was a fitting tribute to Dr. King and reflected a belief that something constructive could be achieved in the aftermath of days of unrest in cities across the country.

In 1988, the law was amended by the Fair Housing Amendments Act, which significantly strengthened the enforcement powers of the act, giving the Departments of Housing and Urban Development and Justice the authority to mandate and to enforce the expanded and comprehensive requirements of the act. Unfortunately, while we can be proud of passing these landmark statutes, the sad fact is that the Fair Housing Act remains the least enforced of our Nation's civil rights laws.

Through the work of local housing groups like the Housing Rights Center in my district in Los Angeles, we know that more than 3.7 million people are discriminated against in housing transactions every year, and we are on the brink of an economic crisis fueled by a failed subprime lending market built

primarily on borrowers and neighborhoods of color.

The current foreclosure crisis is the outgrowth of persistent discrimination in housing, lending and insurance markets that took place under the negligent eyes of the very Federal agencies charged with enforcing our Nation's antidiscrimination laws. In 2007, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development issued only 31 charges of discrimination, and the Department of Justice filed just 35 cases.

Sadly, the risk posed by lax enforcement of the Fair Housing Act is no less than the resegregation of America. While we have made some progress in reducing levels of residential segregation, most Americans live in communities largely divided by race and ethnicity. Perhaps more distressingly, our children are attending increasingly segregated schools. Recent research demonstrates that by 2000, minority students were in schools with substantially fewer white students than was the case a decade earlier. We must reduce those troubling trends.

To that end, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution offered by Mr. GREEN, whose dedication to the housing needs of America and America's most vulnerable households is second to that of no other member of the Housing and Community Opportunity Subcommittee, which I chair.

Additionally, in my role as Chair, I'm joining Mr. GREEN in rededicating myself to the enforcement of the Fair Housing Act, starting with making plans for a joint hearing with the Constitution Subcommittee, chaired by Mr. NADLER of New York, to hold the inadequate efforts of both HUD and the Department of Justice up to congressional scrutiny.

□ 1315

The best way to celebrate the anniversary of the Fair Housing Act is to take concrete actions to enforce both its letter and spirit.

Mr. Chairman of our Judiciary Committee, whose lifelong work has been to end discrimination and to enforce fair housing and to enforce civil rights, I just thank you for having the opportunity to work with you.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I recognize now the gentlewoman from Oakland, California, a valuable member of the House (Ms. LEE), for such time as she may consume.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan will note that there are only 3 minutes remaining.

Ms. LEE. Let me first say to the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, I want to thank you also for staying the course for freedom, justice, and equality for so many years. Thank you, Mr. CONYERS, and thank you for yielding.

Madam Speaker, let me say that I rise in strong support of H. Res. 1095, and I also must thank Congressman AL GREEN for introducing this very important resolution but also for his con-

sistent voice for liberty and justice for all. Thank you, Congressman GREEN.

The Fair Housing Act was critical in ending the rampant discrimination in the housing industry 40 years. Today the Fair Housing Act continues to play a vital and significant role in ensuring fair and equal access to housing for all Americans.

It is in part due to the failure, however, of this administration to enforce these civil rights laws that led to the predatory lending practices that fueled the housing crisis our Nation now faces.

Just like many other innovative and progressive ideas about equality and fairness, I must remind us of the fact that the Fair Housing Act had a California precursor: the Rumford Fair Housing Act, one of the first fair housing laws in the Nation. Former Assemblyman William Byron Rumford, the first African American from Northern California elected to the California legislature, and whose seat I was later honored to hold, passed this landmark bill in 1963, and today I also honor his memory and his legacy.

But like many today who argue that the housing and financial services industries do not need further oversight or regulation, I must remind us also that during this period, a candidate for governor over 40 years ago, Ronald Reagan, fought very hard against fair housing laws. But, thankfully, Ronald Reagan lost his fight to make housing discrimination the law in California, and 40 years ago the Congress passed the Fair Housing Act to outlaw discrimination in housing in every State of the union. Like my colleagues, I also honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. today as we pass this resolution.

Unfortunately, today the promise of fair housing remains unfulfilled. De facto segregation has kicked in. Subprime mortgages have unfairly hit African Americans and the Latino community and other communities of color. So we must work to educate Americans about their right to fair housing and work together to enforce the law. And we must fully fund fair housing programs to at least the tune of \$84 million in fiscal 2009.

So, Madam Speaker, we must commit ourselves today to make these critical investments a guarantee for fair housing for all Americans. Housing should be a basic human right in our great country.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 1095, "Commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the Fair Housing Act", introduced by a fellow Texan, Representative AL GREEN.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is the nation's housing agency committed to increasing homeownership, particularly among minorities; creating affordable housing opportunities for low-income Americans; and supporting the homeless, elderly, people with disabilities and people living with AIDS. The Department also promotes economic and community development and enforces the nation's fair housing laws.

However, according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), more than 10,000 people filed housing discrimination complaints last year, mostly from persons with disabilities. HUD also found that race-based housing discrimination was the second most frequent reason individuals filed complaints.

Of the more than 10,000 complaints filed last year, 43 percent alleged discrimination against persons with disabilities while 37 percent alleged racial discrimination. Most complainants claimed to be victims of discrimination in the terms and conditions of the sale or rental of housing, or outright refusal to rent.

The Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at HUD stated that "Forty years after the passage of the Fair Housing Act, an alarming number of families are still being denied housing and still need the protections this landmark law offers." Assistant Secretary Kim Kendrick's remarks only underscore the importance of HUD's continued enforcement, instruction, and outreach activities to ensure that all Americans have equal access to housing opportunities.

Currently HUD has placed fair housing advertisements on more than 900 movie screens throughout the country. These advertisements inform viewers that it is unlawful to discriminate in the sale, rental, or financing of housing and provided HUD's toll-free telephone number, for those that may have experienced or witnessed unlawful discrimination.

Another part of HUD's outreach in this area is its training program, Fair Housing Accessibility FIRST, which has trained 1,351 individuals in 22 training sessions in 17 states on the Fair Housing Act's design and construction requirements for multifamily housing.

TEXAS

On March 27th, HUD announced that the Texas State Program and the cities of Houston and New Braunfels will receive a total of \$234,868,077 to support community development and produce more affordable housing. HUD's annual funding will also provide down payment assistance to first-time homebuyers; assist individuals and families who might otherwise be living on the streets; and offer real housing solutions for individuals with HIV/AIDS.

This funding will help Texas to reconstruct its neighborhoods and affordable housing stock by helping communities to improve their infrastructure or assisting families to purchase their first home. HUD is helping improve neighborhoods from the ground up.

The funding announced includes: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds; HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) funding; American Dream Down payment assistance; Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG); and, Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA).

Since 1974, HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program has provided more than \$120 billion to state and local governments to target their own community development priorities. The rehabilitation of affordable housing and the improvement of public facilities have traditionally been the largest uses of CDBG although the program is also an important catalyst for job growth and business opportunities. Annual CDBG funds are distributed to communities according to a statutory formula based on a community's population, poverty, and age of its housing stock, and extent of overcrowded housing.

HOME (HOME Investment Partnerships Program) is the largest federal block grant to state and local governments designed exclusively to produce affordable housing for low-income families. Since 1992, more than 600 communities have completed more than 834,000 affordable housing units, including 352,000 for new homebuyers. In addition, 186,000 tenants have received direct rental assistance.

The American Dream Down payment Initiative (ADDI) helps first-time homebuyers with the biggest hurdles to homeownership—down payment and closing costs. The program was created to assist low-income first-time homebuyers in purchasing single-family homes by providing funds for down payment, closing costs, and rehabilitation carried out in conjunction with the assisted home purchase. Since the program's inception, ADDI has assisted nearly 29,000 families to purchase their first home.

Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) helps local communities to meet the basic shelter needs of homeless individuals and families. These grants also provide transitional housing and a variety of support services designed to move the homeless away from a life on the street toward permanent housing. This block grant program, along with more than \$14 million HUD awarded New Orleans and Jefferson Parish by competition, helps thousands of local homeless assistance programs to help those who would otherwise be living on the streets.

HUD's Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) grants are distributed to states and cities based on the number of AIDS cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The grants provide resources for operating community residences and providing rental assistance and support services to individuals with HIV/AIDS and their families. In addition, the HOPWA program also helps many communities develop strategic AIDS housing plans and fill in gaps in local systems of care. A stable home environment is a critical component for low-income persons managing complex drug therapies and potential side effects from their treatments.

SUBPRIME MORTGAGE CRISIS AND HOUSING

Over the past year, we have seen a crisis in subprime mortgage lending, which has threatened the stability of the housing market and the livelihoods of large numbers of Americans. This Democratic Congress is committed to strengthening the housing market and stabilizing the economy, and we have passed important legislation to address this crisis.

Due to the lack of regulation by the federal government, many loans were accompanied by fraud, predatory lending, inadequate information and other failures of responsible marketing. With exceptionally high (and rising) foreclosure rates across the country, homeowners all over America are losing their homes.

The sub-prime mortgage crisis has impacted families and communities across the country. Home foreclosure filings rose to 1.2 million in 2006—a 42 percent jump—due to rising mortgage bills and a slowing housing market. Nationally, as many as 2.4 million sub-prime borrowers have either lost their homes or could lose them in the next few years.

It is critical that we address this crisis. The Bush administration and the mortgage industry

must reach agreement that matches the scale of the problem. If you produce an inadequate agreement, or fail outright, the cost to our economy will be incalculable. The freeze on foreclosures would give the housing market time to stabilize and homeowner's time to build equity.

The 110th Congress has demonstrated its commitment to moving America in a New Direction by raising the minimum wage, implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, opposing the war in Iraq, improving children's health care coverage, increasing aid to the Gulf Coast, passing energy reform, instituting fiscal discipline through pay go budgeting, raising ethical standards for lobbying, and increasing oversight over the Bush Administration on a range of issues including Iraq, FISA, the CIA interrogation tapes, and the Jena 6 cases.

We have also made efforts to strengthen the housing market, including continued efforts to end discriminatory practices and stabilize the economy. Expanding affordable housing and mortgage opportunities for all American families is of paramount importance.

CONCLUSION

The 40th Anniversary of the Fair Housing Act comes only a few weeks after the Anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and—oh how fitting. The things he fought for then, the principles he gave his life for are still ideals we fight for today. We must continue the fight to end discrimination not just in the area of housing but in education, in healthcare, in politics. Madam Speaker, I remind colleagues of the importance of the Fair Housing Act, what it has meant to all Americans.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise to commend my colleague Congressman GREEN for sponsoring this resolution to recognize and honor the 40th anniversary of congressional passage of title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, the Fair Housing Act, and the 20th anniversary of the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988. It is important that we honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King and reflect on how far we have come. It is equally important, as we witness tens of thousands of Americans who risk losing their homes to foreclosure this year, that we rededicate ourselves to standing firm for those victimized by this economy or victimized by residual discrimination. We must continue to encourage all people and all three levels of government to rededicate themselves to the enforcement and the ideals of fair housing laws.

The fair provision of housing and economic opportunity—and especially the drive to ensure safe shelter for those in need—has been a compelling foundation of my career in public service. As a council member and subsequently as mayor of Alexandria, I served as vice chairman of the Alexandria Economic Opportunity Commission when the commission began its efforts to ensure local, State, and Federal action to bring down the barriers in rental housing that so discriminated against single women with children.

The enactment of the Fair Housing Act of 1988 was a testament to many of our former colleagues in this region, including former Congresswoman Gladys Spellman, former Senator Charles MacMathias, and former Delegate, Reverend Walter Fauntroy. That enactment was an honor to them and to thousands of Americans who joined in a national effort to

seek justice and enduring rights for women in that most fundamental of human needs: shelter.

In Alexandria, our commission—and our city—focus on special populations, such as at-risk preschool children and teens, the homeless, ex-offenders, single parents, as well as the low-income community in general. These populations, our most vulnerable, face enough of an uphill struggle everyday as it is without governmentally permitted discrimination. I am proud at what we were able to accomplish so many years ago, but I remain committed the vision that Dr. King and others set before us, which we honor and remember today.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman from Michigan has expired.

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1095.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RELIGIOUS WORKER VISA EXTENSION ACT OF 2008

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5570) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to eliminate the sunset in the special immigrant nonminister religious worker visa program, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5570

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Religious Worker Visa Extension Act of 2008".

SEC. 2. SPECIAL IMMIGRANT NONMINISTER RELIGIOUS WORKER PROGRAM.

(a) REGULATIONS.—Not later than December 31, 2008, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall issue final regulations to eliminate or reduce fraud in the special immigrant categories described in subclauses (II) and (III) of section 101(a)(27)(C)(ii) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(27)(C)(ii)).

(b) EXTENSIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 101(a)(27)(C)(ii) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(27)(C)(ii)) is amended by striking "October 1, 2008," each place such term appears and inserting "January 1, 2010,".

(2) CONDITIONAL FURTHER EXTENSION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Section 101(a)(27)(C)(ii) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(27)(C)(ii)), as amended by paragraph (1), is further amended by striking "January 1, 2010," each place such term appears and inserting "January 1, 2016,".

(B) CONDITIONAL EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subparagraph (A) shall take effect on March 1, 2009, but only if the Secretary of Homeland Security has complied with subsection (a).

(c) REPORT.—Not later than September 30, 2010, the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security shall submit to