

Jersey City Housing Authority in my district. They told me they had to lay off 34 employees because of asset management. When I looked into this, I learned that Jersey City was not unique. Over 800 public housing authorities had their operating budgets cut because of the way asset management was implemented by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. At the same time, the Department limited the amount of flexibility given to public housing authorities to make ends meet. I knew something had to be done.

With the support of Chairman FRANK, Congressman MEEK, and others, I introduced H.R. 6216, the Asset Management Improvement Act of 2008. You will note that the title indicates that the bill improves asset management; it does not put an end to asset management. That is because I feel strongly that the goals of asset management are worthwhile.

By making public housing authorities run more efficiently, asset management has the potential to improve the lives of all those who live in public housing in this country.

My bill simply makes four improvements to the asset management rule and it alters the management of public housing in other aspects. First, it requires new negotiations to establish a reasonable management fee and allows public housing authorities to revert back to the old funding mechanism until final implementation of asset management on January 1, 2011. Congress has previously acted to require this, but HUD failed to act. This bill sets HUD straight.

Second, my bill reaffirms current law by allowing public housing authorities to transfer funds between their operating fund and their capital fund. This provision prevents the Department from prohibiting such transfers. This flexibility is vital to agencies, particularly since the housing program is underfunded. Housing authorities know best where they need funding, not Washington.

There is wide agreement on this provision. In fact, this provision was included in the Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2008. That provision, however, is only valid for 1 year. My bill will make this change permanent.

Third, my bill decreases the exemption threshold from small to medium-sized public housing authorities. The Department recognized that small authorities with fewer than 250 units of housing would not benefit from the benefits of asset management, and so they are exempted. My bill simply raises this threshold to 500 units.

Again, there is little disagreement on raising the threshold. The Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2008 raised the exemption threshold to 400. My bill goes a little further; to 500 units. The impact of this change would only affect 110 public housing authorities, some of whom may not opt out of

asset management because they think it makes good sense. Even with this change, over two-thirds of all public housing units will still be covered by the asset management rules.

Third, my bill restates current law in terms of tenant participation. It simply says tenants should be allowed to participate in the decision affecting their homes. It prohibits the Department from altering tenant participation rights and it encourages public housing authorities to include tenants in discussions about asset management that directly affects their home.

The bill alters public housing management in a few other ways. First, it restates current law that undocumented immigrants are ineligible for public housing assistance. It includes language that Congresswoman BACHMANN brought to our attention on gun rules. In fact, we have incorporated her language into the bill.

Public housing authorities cannot require gun registration or prohibit gun ownership if local laws do not restrict ownership. Public housing authorities, as a whole, feel this is a reasonable requirement. Additionally, this bill allows public housing authorities to evict tenants who use an illegal weapon while on public housing property. This text was added by Representatives MALONEY and BOREN, recognizing that tenants do not have a right to use illegal weapons in public housing.

Together, these changes make several improvements to the management of public housing. It will improve the lives of all the residents.

□ 1330

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

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. I yield the gentleman an additional minute.

Mr. SIRE. Let me end with this: My office has taken calls from public housing authorities across the Nation. Small, large, urban and rural housing authorities support this bill, and I hope that Members will support this bill. Please make a difference for public housing residents and public housing authorities by easing their regulatory burden. Vote "yes" on H.R. 6216.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey and certainly support his bill, but I think it is appropriate when talking about trying to stretch our public housing dollars as much as we can to provide housing and safety and cover and a sense of community to many families, I think it brings to light what many families are thinking about right now, and that is the high price of gasoline, how are they getting to where they need to go, to get to a job, to pick up their children at school, to go to church, to go to the grocery store, all the things of daily living.

Many of our public housing situations don't have access to bus routes or any kind of mass transportation, so I

think it is incumbent upon this Congress to address this very difficult issue, and I have put forward, as have many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, ways to address this, whether it is more drilling, whether it is coal-to-liquid, whether it is more renewables. But it is certainly not standing still. And as we try to move our dollars into the public housing arena to provide shelter and homes for many, many Americans across this country, I think it is important at the same time when people are figuring out how they are going to pay their rent, they realize how are they going to pay for their gas, how are they going to pay for their food.

So I would encourage as we look at housing issues today, we also look at the very important issue of energy in our homes and with our families.

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

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. I am about to close, Mr. Speaker. I did want to reassure my colleague from West Virginia, and I appreciate that she is doing her part by making clear that gasoline should be cheaper, it is a very important issue when we talk about financing public housing, I want to reassure her that nothing in this bill prohibits drilling for oil on public housing property. I know there is a lot of concern on the Republican side about that, so they should rest assured that they are okay.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and to insert extraneous material thereon, following the precedent of the gentleman from West Virginia, who has already inserted very extraneous material in the debate on this bill.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6216, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### HOMES FOR HEROES ACT OF 2007

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3329) to provide housing assistance for very low-income veterans, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3329

*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 “Homes for Heroes Act of 2008”.

**SEC. 2. SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR VETERANS AFFAIRS IN OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT.**

Section 4 of the Department of Housing and Urban Development Act (42 U.S.C. 3533) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(g) **SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR VETERANS AFFAIRS.**—

“(1) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There shall be in the Department a Special Assistant for Veterans Affairs, who shall be in the Office of the Secretary.

“(2) **APPOINTMENT.**—The Special Assistant for Veterans Affairs shall be appointed based solely on merit and shall be covered under the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service.

“(3) **RESPONSIBILITIES.**—The Special Assistant for Veterans Affairs shall be responsible for—

“(A) ensuring veterans have access to housing and homeless assistance under each program of the Department providing either such assistance;

“(B) coordinating all programs and activities of the Department relating to veterans;

“(C) serving as a liaison for the Department with the Department of Veterans Affairs, including establishing and maintaining relationships with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs;

“(D) serving as a liaison for the Department, and establishing and maintaining relationships with officials of State, local, regional, and nongovernmental organizations concerned with veterans;

“(E) providing information and advice regarding—

“(i) sponsoring housing projects for veterans assisted under programs administered by the Department; or

“(ii) assisting veterans in obtaining housing or homeless assistance under programs administered by the Department;

“(F) preparing the annual report under section 8 of such Act; and

“(G) carrying out such other duties as may be assigned to the Special Assistant by the Secretary or by law.”.

**SEC. 3. SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR VERY LOW-INCOME VETERAN FAMILIES.**

(a) **PURPOSE.**—The purposes of this section are—

(1) to expand the supply of permanent housing for very low-income veteran families; and

(2) to provide supportive services through such housing to support the needs of such veteran families.

(b) **AUTHORITY.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall, to the extent amounts are made available for assistance under this section and the Secretary receives approvable applications for such assistance, provide assistance to private nonprofit organizations and consumer cooperatives to expand the supply of supportive housing for very low-income veteran families.

(2) **NATURE OF ASSISTANCE.**—The assistance provided under paragraph (1)—

(A) shall be available for use to plan for and finance the acquisition, construction, reconstruction, or moderate or substantial rehabilitation of a structure or a portion of a structure to be used as supportive housing for very low-income veteran families in accordance with this section; and

(B) may also cover the cost of real property acquisition, site improvement, conversion, demolition, relocation, and other expenses that the Secretary determines are necessary to expand the supply of supportive housing for very low-income veteran families.

(3) **CONSULTATION.**—In meeting the requirement of paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consult with—

(A) the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and  
(B) the Special Assistant for Veterans Affairs, as such Special Assistant was established under section 4(g) of the Department of Housing and Urban Development Act.

(c) **FORMS OF ASSISTANCE.**—Assistance under this section shall be made available in the following forms:

(1) **PLANNING GRANTS.**—Assistance may be provided as a grant for costs of planning a project to be used as supportive housing for very low-income veteran families.

(2) **CAPITAL ADVANCES.**—Assistance may be provided as a capital advance under this paragraph for a project, such advance shall—

(A) bear no interest;

(B) not be required to be repaid so long as the housing remains available for occupancy by very low-income veteran families in accordance with this section; and

(C) be in an amount calculated in accordance with the development cost limitation established pursuant to subsection (i).

(3) **PROJECT RENTAL ASSISTANCE.**—Assistance may be provided as project rental assistance, under an annual contract that—

(A) obligates the Secretary to make monthly payments to cover any part of the costs attributed to units occupied (or, as approved by the Secretary, held for occupancy) by very low-income veteran families that is not met from project income;

(B) provides for the project not more than the sum of the initial annual project rentals for all units so occupied and any initial utility allowances for such units, as approved by the Secretary;

(C) provides that any contract amounts not used by a project in any year shall remain available to the project until the expiration of the contract;

(D) provides that upon the expiration of each contract term, the Secretary shall adjust the annual contract amount to provide for reasonable project costs, and any increases, including adequate reserves, supportive services, and service coordinators, except that any contract amounts not used by a project during a contract term shall not be available for such adjustments upon renewal; and

(E) provides that in the event of emergency situations that are outside the control of the owner, the Secretary shall increase the annual contract amount, subject to reasonable review and limitations as the Secretary shall provide.

(d) **TENANT RENT CONTRIBUTION.**—A very low-income veteran family shall pay as rent for a dwelling unit assisted under this section the highest of the following amounts, rounded to the nearest dollar:

(1) 30 percent of the veteran family's adjusted monthly income.

(2) 10 percent of the veteran family's monthly income.

(3) If the veteran family is receiving payments for welfare assistance from a public agency and a part of such payments, adjusted in accordance with the veteran family's actual housing costs, is specifically designated by such agency to meet the veteran family's housing costs, the portion of such payments which is so designated.

(e) **TERM OF COMMITMENT.**—

(1) **USE LIMITATIONS.**—All units in housing assisted under this section shall be made

available for occupancy by very low-income veteran families for not less than 15 years.

(2) **CONTRACT TERMS FOR PROJECT RENTAL ASSISTANCE.**—

(A) **INITIAL TERM.**—The initial term of a contract entered into under subsection (c)(3) shall be 60 months.

(B) **EXTENSION.**—The Secretary shall, subject only to the availability of amounts provided in appropriation Acts, renew the contract entered into under subsection (c)(3) for 10 consecutive one-year terms, the first such term beginning upon the expiration of such 60-month period.

(C) **AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY TO MAKE EARLY COMMITMENTS.**—In order to facilitate the orderly extension of expiring contracts, the Secretary may make commitments to extend expiring contracts during the year prior to the date of expiration.

(f) **APPLICATIONS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Amounts made available under this section shall be allocated by the Secretary among approvable applications submitted by private nonprofit organizations and consumer cooperatives.

(2) **CONTENT OF APPLICATION.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Applications for assistance under this section shall be submitted by an applicant in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Secretary shall establish.

(B) **REQUIRED CONTENT.**—Applications for assistance under this section shall contain—

(i) a description of the proposed housing;

(ii) a description of the assistance the applicant seeks under this section;

(iii) a description of—

(I) the supportive services to be provided to the persons occupying such housing;

(II) the manner in which such services will be provided to such persons, including, in the case of frail elderly persons (as such term is defined in section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959 (42 U.S.C. 1701q)), evidence of such residential supervision as the Secretary determines is necessary to facilitate the adequate provision of such services; and

(III) the public or private sources of assistance that can reasonably be expected to fund or provide such services;

(iv) a certification from the public official responsible for submitting a housing strategy for the jurisdiction to be served in accordance with section 105 of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 12705) that the proposed project is consistent with the approved housing strategy; and

(v) such other information or certifications that the Secretary determines to be necessary or appropriate to achieve the purposes of this section.

(3) **REJECTION.**—The Secretary shall not reject any application for assistance under this section on technical grounds without giving notice of that rejection and the basis therefore to the applicant.

(g) **INITIAL SELECTION CRITERIA AND PROCESSING.**—

(1) **SELECTION CRITERIA.**—The Secretary shall establish selection criteria for assistance under this section, which shall include—

(A) criteria based upon—

(i) the ability of the applicant to develop and operate the proposed housing;

(ii) the need for supportive housing for very low-income veteran families in the area to be served;

(iii) the extent to which the proposed size and unit mix of the housing will enable the applicant to manage and operate the housing efficiently and ensure that the provision of supportive services will be accomplished in an economical fashion;

(iv) the extent to which the proposed design of the housing will meet the service-

connected disability needs of very low-income veteran families;

(v) the extent to which the applicant has demonstrated that the supportive services identified pursuant to subsection (f)(2)(B)(iii) will be provided on a consistent, long-term basis;

(vi) the extent to which the proposed design of the housing will accommodate the provision of supportive services that are expected to be needed, either initially or over the useful life of the housing, by the very low-income veterans the housing is intended to serve;

(vii) the extent to which the applicant has ensured that a service coordinator will be employed or otherwise retained for the housing, who has the managerial capacity and responsibility for carrying out the actions described in clauses (i) and (ii) of subsection (h)(2)(A); and

(viii) such other factors as the Secretary determines to be appropriate to ensure that funds made available under this section are used effectively;

(B) a preference in such selection for applications proposing housing to be reserved for occupancy by very low-income veteran families who are homeless (as such term is defined in section 103 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11302)); and

(C) criteria appropriate to consider the need for supportive housing for very low-income veteran families in nonmetropolitan areas and by Indian tribes.

#### (2) DELEGATED PROCESSING.—

(A) DELEGATION TO STATE OR LOCAL HOUSING AUTHORITY.—In issuing a capital advance under this subsection for any project for which financing for the purposes described in subsection (b)(2) is provided by a combination of a capital advance under subsection (c)(2) and sources other than this section, within 30 days of award of the capital advance, the Secretary shall delegate review and processing of such projects to a State or local housing agency that—

(i) is in geographic proximity to the property;

(ii) has demonstrated experience in and capacity for underwriting multifamily housing loans that provide housing and supportive services;

(iii) may or may not be providing low-income housing tax credits in combination with the capital advance under this section; and

(iv) agrees to issue a firm commitment within 12 months of delegation.

(B) PROCESSING BY SECRETARY.—The Secretary shall retain the authority to process capital advances in cases in which no State or local housing agency has applied to provide delegated processing pursuant to this paragraph or no such agency has entered into an agreement with the Secretary to serve as a delegated processing agency.

(C) PROCESSING FEES.—An agency to which review and processing is delegated pursuant to subparagraph (A) may assess a reasonable fee which shall be included in the capital advance amounts and may recommend project rental assistance amounts in excess of those initially awarded by the Secretary. The Secretary shall develop a schedule for reasonable fees under this subparagraph to be paid to delegated processing agencies, which shall take into consideration any other fees to be paid to the agency for other funding provided to the project by the agency, including bonds, tax credits, and other gap funding.

(D) AUTHORITY RETAINED BY SECRETARY.—Under such delegated system, the Secretary shall retain the authority to approve rents and development costs and to execute a capital advance within 60 days of receipt of the commitment from the State or local agency.

The Secretary shall provide to such agency and the project sponsor, in writing, the reasons for any reduction in capital advance amounts or project rental assistance and such reductions shall be subject to appeal.

#### (h) PROVISION OF SUPPORTIVE SERVICES TO VETERAN FAMILIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall coordinate with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that any housing assistance provided to veterans or veteran families includes a range of services tailored to the needs of the very low-income veteran families occupying such housing, which may include services for—

- (A) outreach;
- (B) health (including counseling, mental health, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, and traumatic brain injury) diagnosis and treatment;
- (C) habilitation and rehabilitation;
- (D) case management;
- (E) daily living;
- (F) personal financial planning;
- (G) transportation;
- (H) vocation;
- (I) employment and training;
- (J) education;
- (K) assistance in obtaining veterans benefits and public benefits;
- (L) assistance in obtaining income support;
- (M) assistance in obtaining health insurance;
- (N) fiduciary and representative payee;
- (O) legal aid;
- (P) child care;
- (Q) housing counseling;
- (R) service coordination; and
- (S) other services necessary for maintaining independent living.

#### (2) LOCAL COORDINATION OF SERVICES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall coordinate with the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that owners of housing assisted under this section have the managerial capacity to—

- (i) assess on an ongoing basis the service needs of residents;
- (ii) coordinate the provision of supportive services and tailor such services to the individual needs of residents; and
- (iii) seek on a continuous basis new sources of assistance to ensure the long-term provision of supportive services.

(B) CLASSIFICATION OF COSTS.—Any cost associated with this subsection relating to the coordination of services shall be an eligible cost under subsections (c)(3).

#### (i) DEVELOPMENT COST LIMITATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall periodically establish reasonable development cost limitations by market area for various types and sizes of supportive housing for very low-income veteran families by publishing a notice of the cost limitations in the Federal Register.

(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—The cost limitations established under paragraph (1) shall reflect—

- (A) the cost of construction, reconstruction, or moderate or substantial rehabilitation of supportive housing for very low-income veteran families that meets applicable State and local housing and building codes;
- (B) the cost of movables necessary to the basic operation of the housing, as determined by the Secretary;
- (C) the cost of special design features necessary to make the housing accessible to very low-income veteran families;
- (D) the cost of community space necessary to accommodate the provision of supportive services to veteran families;
- (E) if the housing is newly constructed, the cost of meeting the energy efficiency standards promulgated by the Secretary in accordance with section 109 of the Cranston-

Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 12709); and

(F) the cost of land, including necessary site improvement.

(3) USE OF DATA.—In establishing development cost limitations for a given market area under this subsection, the Secretary shall use data that reflect currently prevailing costs of construction, reconstruction, or moderate or substantial rehabilitation, and land acquisition in the area.

(4) COMMUNITY SPACE.—For purposes of paragraph (2), a community space shall include space for cafeterias or dining halls, community rooms or buildings, workshops, child care, adult day health facilities or other outpatient health facilities, or other essential service facilities.

(5) COMMERCIAL FACILITIES.—Neither this section nor any other provision of law may be construed as prohibiting or preventing the location and operation, in a project assisted under this section, of commercial facilities for the benefit of residents of the project and the community in which the project is located, except that assistance made available under this section may not be used to subsidize any such commercial facility.

(6) ACQUISITION.—In the case of existing housing and related facilities to be acquired, the cost limitations shall include—

- (A) the cost of acquiring such housing;
- (B) the cost of rehabilitation, alteration, conversion, or improvement, including the moderate or substantial rehabilitation thereof; and
- (C) the cost of the land on which the housing and related facilities are located.

(7) ANNUAL ADJUSTMENTS.—The Secretary shall adjust the cost limitation not less than annually to reflect changes in the general level of construction, reconstruction, and moderate and substantial rehabilitation costs.

#### (8) INCENTIVES FOR SAVINGS.—

##### (A) SPECIAL HOUSING ACCOUNT.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall use the development cost limitations established under paragraph (1) or (6) to calculate the amount of financing to be made available to individual owners.

(ii) ACTUAL DEVELOPMENTAL COSTS LESS THAN FINANCING.—Owners which incur actual development costs that are less than the amount of financing shall be entitled to retain 50 percent of the savings in a special housing account.

(iii) BONUS FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY.—The percentage established under clause (ii) shall be increased to 75 percent for owners which add energy efficiency features which—

(I) exceed the energy efficiency standards promulgated by the Secretary in accordance with section 109 of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 12709);

(II) substantially reduce the life-cycle cost of the housing; and

(III) reduce gross rent requirements.

(B) USES.—The special housing account established under subparagraph (A) may be used—

(i) to provide services to residents of the housing or funds set aside for replacement reserves; or

(ii) for such other purposes as determined by the Secretary.

(9) DESIGN FLEXIBILITY.—The Secretary shall, to the extent practicable, give owners the flexibility to design housing appropriate to their location and proposed resident population within broadly defined parameters.

(10) USE OF FUNDS FROM OTHER SOURCES.—An owner shall be permitted voluntarily to provide funds from sources other than this section for amenities and other features of appropriate design and construction suitable

for supportive housing under this section if the cost of such amenities is—

- (A) not financed with the advance; and
- (B) is not taken into account in determining the amount of Federal assistance or of the rent contribution of tenants.

(j) TENANT SELECTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—An owner shall adopt written tenant selection procedures that are—

(A) satisfactory to the Secretary and which are—

- (i) consistent with the purpose of improving housing opportunities for very low-income veteran families; and
- (ii) reasonably related to program eligibility and an applicant's ability to perform the obligations of the lease; and

(B) compliant with subtitle C of title VI of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992 (42 U.S.C. 13601 et seq.) and any regulations issued under such subtitle.

(2) NOTIFICATION OF REJECTION.—Owners shall promptly notify in writing any rejected applicant of the grounds for any rejection.

(3) INFORMATION REGARDING HOUSING.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide, to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Labor, information regarding the availability of the housing assisted under this section.

(B) SHARING OF INFORMATION WITH ADDITIONAL AGENCIES.—Within 30 days of receipt of the information, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of Labor shall provide such information to agencies in the area of the housing that receive assistance from the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Labor for providing medical care, housing, supportive services or employment and training services to homeless veterans.

(k) MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS.—

(1) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall make available appropriate technical assistance to ensure that prospective applicants are able to participate more fully in the program carried out under this section.

(2) CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE.—Each owner shall certify, to the satisfaction of the Secretary, that assistance made available under this section will be conducted and administered in conformity with title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000a et seq.), the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.), and other Federal, State, and local laws prohibiting discrimination and promoting equal opportunity.

(3) OWNER DEPOSIT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall require an owner of housing, assisted under this section, to deposit an amount not to exceed \$15,000 in a special escrow account to ensure the owner's commitment to the housing. Such amount shall be used only to cover operating deficits during the first three years of operations and shall not be used to cover construction shortfalls or inadequate initial project rental assistance amounts.

(B) REDUCTION OF REQUIREMENT.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may reduce or waive the owner deposit specified under subparagraph (A) for individual applicants if the Secretary finds that such waiver or reduction is necessary to achieve the purposes of this section and the applicant demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary that it has the capacity to manage and maintain the housing in accordance with this section.

(ii) NONPROFITS.—The Secretary may reduce or waive the requirement of the owner deposit under subparagraph (A) in the case of a nonprofit applicant that is not affiliated with a national sponsor, as determined by the Secretary.

(4) NOTICE OF APPEAL.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall notify an owner not less than 30 days prior to canceling any reservation of assistance provided under this section.

(B) APPEAL.—

(i) FILING DEADLINE.—During the 30-day period following the receipt of any notice required under subparagraph (A), an owner may appeal the proposed cancellation.

(ii) TIMING OF DECISION.—Any appeal undertaken under clause (i), including review by the Secretary, shall be completed not later than 45 days after the appeal is filed.

(5) LABOR.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall take such action as may be necessary to ensure that all laborers and mechanics employed by contractors and subcontractors in the construction of housing with 12 or more units assisted under this section shall be paid wages at rates not less than the rates prevailing in the locality involved for the corresponding classes of laborers and mechanics employed on construction of a similar character, as determined by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with subchapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40, United States Code.

(B) EXEMPTION.—Subparagraph (A) shall not apply to any individual who—

- (i) performs services for which the individual volunteered;
- (ii) does not receive compensation for such services or is paid expenses, reasonable benefits, or a nominal fee for such services; and
- (iii) is not otherwise employed at any time in the construction work.

(6) ACCESS TO RESIDUAL RECEIPTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall authorize the owner of a housing project assisted under this section to use any residual receipts held for the project in excess of \$500 per unit (or in excess of such other amount prescribed by the Secretary based on the needs of the project) for activities to retrofit and renovate the project as described under section 802(d)(3) of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 8011(d)(3)) or to provide supportive services to residents of the project.

(B) REPORT.—Any owner that uses residual receipts under this paragraph shall submit to the Secretary a report, not less than annually, describing the uses of the residual receipts.

(C) DETERMINATION OF AMOUNT.—In determining the amount of project rental assistance to be provided to a project under subsection (c)(3) of this section, the Secretary may take into consideration the residual receipts held for the project only if, and to the extent that, excess residual receipts are not used under this paragraph.

(7) OCCUPANCY STANDARDS AND OBLIGATIONS.—Each owner shall operate housing assisted under this section in compliance with subtitle C of title VI of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992 (42 U.S.C. 13601 et seq.) and any regulations issued under such subtitle.

(8) USE OF PROJECT RESERVES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Amounts for project reserves for a project assisted under this section may be used for costs, subject to reasonable limitations as the Secretary determines appropriate, for reducing the number of dwelling units in the project.

(B) APPROVAL OF SECRETARY REQUIRED.—Any use described in subparagraph (A) of amounts for project reserves for a project assisted under this section shall be subject to the approval of the Secretary to ensure that such use is designed to retrofit units that are currently obsolete or unmarketable.

(9) REPAYMENT OF ASSISTANCE AND PREVENTION OF UNDUE BENEFITS.—

(A) REPAYMENT.—If a recipient, or a project sponsor receiving funds from the recipient, receives assistance under subsection

(b) for use pursuant to paragraph (2) of such subsection for the construction, acquisition, or rehabilitation of supportive housing for very low-income veteran families and the project ceases to provide permanent housing, the Secretary shall require the recipient, or such project sponsor, to repay the following percentage of such assistance:

(i) In the case of a project that ceases to be used for such supportive housing before the expiration of the 10-year period beginning upon commencement of the operation of the project, 100 percent.

(ii) In the case of a project that ceases to be used for such supportive housing on or after the expiration of the 10-year period beginning upon commencement of the operation of the project, but before the expiration of the 15-year period beginning upon such commencement, 20 percent of the assistance for each of the years during such 15-year period for which the project fails to provide permanent housing.

(B) PREVENTION OF UNDUE BENEFITS.—Except as provided in paragraph (C), if any property is used for a project that receives assistance under subsection (b) for use pursuant to paragraph (2) of such subsection for the construction, acquisition or rehabilitation of supportive housing for very low-income veteran families, and the sale or other disposition of the property occurs before the expiration of the 15-year period beginning upon commencement of the operation of the project, the recipient (or the project sponsor receiving funds from the recipient) shall comply with such terms and conditions as the Secretary may prescribe to prevent the recipient (or such project sponsor) from unduly benefitting from such sale or disposition.

(C) EXCEPTION.—A recipient, or a project sponsor receiving funds from the recipient, shall not be required to make repayments, and comply with the terms and conditions, required under subparagraph (A) or (B) if—

(i) the sale or disposition of the property used for the project results in the use of the property for the direct benefit of very-low income persons;

(ii) all of the proceeds of the sale or disposition are used to provide permanent housing for very-low income veteran families meeting the requirements of this section;

(iii) project-based rental assistance or operating cost assistance from any Federal program or an equivalent State or local program is no longer made available and the project is meeting applicable performance standards, provided that the portion of the project that had benefitted from such assistance continues to meet the tenant income and rent restrictions for low-income units under section 42(g) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; or

(iv) there are no low-income veteran families in the geographic area of the property who meet the program criteria, in which case the project may serve non-veteran individuals and families having incomes described in subsection (1)(2) of this section.

(10) CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY OF VERY LOW-INCOME VETERAN FAMILIES.—A veteran family residing in supportive housing assisted under this section may not be considered to lose its status as such a family for purposes of eligibility for continued occupancy in such housing due to the death of any veteran member of the family, including the sole veteran member of the family.

(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the following definitions shall apply:

(1) CONSUMER COOPERATIVE.—The term "consumer cooperative" has the same meaning given such term for purposes of the supportive housing for the elderly program under section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959 (12 U.S.C. 1701q).

(2) **VERY LOW-INCOME VETERAN FAMILY.**—The term “very low-income veteran family” means a veteran family whose income does not exceed 50 percent of the median income for the area, as determined by the Secretary with adjustments for smaller and larger families, except that the Secretary may establish an income ceiling higher or lower than 50 percent of the median for the area on the basis of the Secretary’s findings that such variations are necessary because of prevailing levels of construction costs or fair market rents (as determined under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f)), or unusually high or low family incomes.

(3) **OWNER.**—The term “owner” means a private nonprofit organization or consumer cooperative that receives assistance under this section to develop and operate supportive housing for very low-income veteran families.

(4) **PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.**—The term “private nonprofit organization” means—

(A) any incorporated private institution or foundation—

(i) no part of the net earnings of which inures to the benefit of any member, founder, contributor, or individual;

(ii) which has a governing board that is responsible for the operation of the housing assisted under this section; and

(iii) which is approved by the Secretary as to financial responsibility;

(B) a for-profit limited partnership the sole or managing general partner of which is an organization meeting the requirements under clauses (i), (ii), and (iii) of subparagraph (A) or a corporation meeting the requirements of subparagraph (C);

(C) a corporation wholly owned and controlled by an organization meeting the requirements under clauses (i), (ii), and (iii) of subparagraph (A); and

(D) a tribally designated housing entity, as such term is defined in section 4 of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4103).

(5) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, except where specifically provided otherwise.

(6) **STATE.**—The term “State” includes the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the possessions of the United States.

(7) **SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR VERY LOW-INCOME VETERAN FAMILIES.**—The term “supportive housing for very low-income veteran families” means housing that is designed to accommodate the provision of supportive services that are expected to be needed, either initially or over the useful life of the housing, by the veteran families that the housing is intended to serve.

(8) **VETERAN.**—The term “veteran” has the meaning given the term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

(9) **VETERAN FAMILY.**—The term “veteran family” includes a veteran who is a single person, a family (including families with children) whose head of household (or whose spouse) is a veteran, and one or more veterans living together with 1 or more persons.

(m) **ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.**—Of any amounts made available for assistance under this section:

(1) **PLANNING GRANTS.**—Not more than 2.5 percent shall be available for planning grants in accordance with subsection (c)(1).

(2) **CAPITAL ADVANCES.**—Such sums as may be necessary shall be available for capital advances in accordance with subsection (c)(2).

(3) **PROJECT RENTAL ASSISTANCE.**—Such sums as may be necessary shall be available

for project rental assistance in accordance with subsection (c)(3).

(4) **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.**—Not more than 1 percent shall be available for technical assistance in accordance with subsection (k)(1).

(n) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR HOUSING ASSISTANCE.**—There is authorized to be appropriated for assistance under this section \$200,000,000 for fiscal year 2008 and such sums as may be necessary for each fiscal year thereafter.

#### SEC. 4. HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHERS FOR HOMELESS VETERANS.

Section 8(o)(19) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)) is amended to read as follows:

“(19) **RENTAL VOUCHERS FOR HOMELESS VETERANS.**—

“(A) **ADDITIONAL VOUCHERS.**—In addition to any amount made available for rental assistance under this subsection, the Secretary shall make available the amount specified in subparagraph (B), for use only for providing rental assistance for homeless veterans in conjunction with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

“(B) **AMOUNT.**—The amount specified in this subparagraph is, for each fiscal year, the amount necessary to provide not fewer than 20,000 vouchers for rental assistance under this subsection.

“(C) **CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY OF HOMELESS VETERAN FAMILIES.**—If any veteran member of a household for which rental assistance is being provided under this paragraph, including the sole veteran member of the household, dies, such household may not be considered, due to such death, to lose its status as the household of a homeless veteran for purposes of—

“(i) eligibility for continued assistance under this paragraph; or

“(ii) continued occupancy in the dwelling unit in which such family is residing using such assistance at the time of such death.

“(D) **FUNDING.**—The budget authority made available under any other provisions of law for rental assistance under this subsection for fiscal year 2008 and each fiscal year thereafter is authorized to be increased in each such fiscal year by such sums as may be necessary to provide the number of vouchers specified in subparagraph (B) for such fiscal year.”

#### SEC. 5. INCLUSION OF VETERANS IN HOUSING PLANNING.

(a) **PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCY PLANS.**—Section 5A(d)(1) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437c-1(d)(1)) is amended by striking “and disabled families” and inserting “, disabled families, and veterans (as such term is defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code)”.

(b) **COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY STRATEGIES.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 105 of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 12705) is amended—

(A) in subsection (b)(1), by inserting “veterans (as such term is defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code),” after “acquired immunodeficiency syndrome,”;

(B) in subsection (b)(20), by striking “and service” and inserting “veterans service, and other service”; and

(C) in subsection (e)(1), by inserting “veterans (as such term is defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code),” after “homeless persons,”.

(2) **CONSOLIDATED PLANS.**—The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall revise the regulations relating to submission of consolidated plans (part 91 of title 24, Code of Federal Regulations) in accordance with the amendments made by paragraph (1) of this subsection to require inclusion of appro-

priate information relating to veterans and veterans service agencies in all such plans.

#### SEC. 6. EXCLUSION OF VETERANS BENEFITS FROM ASSISTED HOUSING RENT CONSIDERATIONS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, for purposes of determining the amount of rent paid by a family for occupancy of a dwelling unit assisted under a federally assisted housing program under subsection (b) or in housing assisted under any other federally assisted housing program, the income and the adjusted income of the family shall not be considered to include any amounts received by any member of the family from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs as—

(1) compensation, as such term is defined in section 101(13) of title 38, United States Code; and

(2) dependency and indemnity compensation, as such term is defined in section 101(14) of such title.

(b) **FEDERALLY ASSISTED HOUSING PROGRAM.**—The federally assisted housing programs under this subsection are—

(1) the public housing program under the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437 et seq.);

(2) the tenant-based rental assistance program under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f), including the program under subsection (o)(19) of such section for housing rental vouchers for low-income veteran families;

(3) the project-based rental assistance program under section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f);

(4) the program for housing opportunities for persons with AIDS under subtitle D of title VIII of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 12901 et seq.);

(5) the supportive housing for the elderly program under section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959 (42 U.S.C. 1701q);

(6) the supportive housing for persons with disabilities program under section 811 of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 8013);

(7) the supportive housing for the homeless program under subtitle C of title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11381 et seq.);

(8) the program for moderate rehabilitation of single room occupancy dwellings for occupancy by the homeless under section 441 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11401);

(9) the shelter plus care for the homeless program under subtitle F of title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11403 et seq.);

(10) the supportive housing for very low-income veteran families program under section 3 of this Act;

(11) the rental assistance payments program under section 521(a)(2)(A) of the Housing Act of 1949 (42 U.S.C. 1490a(a)(2)(A));

(12) the rental assistance program under section 236 of the National Housing Act (12 U.S.C. 1715z-1);

(13) the rural housing programs under section 515 and 538 of the Housing Act of 1949 (42 U.S.C. 1485, 1490p-2);

(14) the HOME investment partnerships program under title II of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 12721 et seq.);

(15) the block grant programs for affordable housing for Native Americans and Native Hawaiians under titles I through IV and VIII of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4111 et seq., 4221 et seq.);

(16) any other program for housing assistance administered by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development or the Secretary

of Agriculture under which eligibility for occupancy in the housing assisted or for housing assistance is based upon income;

(17) low-income housing credits allocated pursuant to section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; and

(18) tax-exempt bonds issued for qualified residential rental projects pursuant to section 142(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

#### SEC. 7. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS FOR HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall, to the extent amounts are made available in appropriation Acts for grants under this section, make grants to eligible entities under subsection (b) to provide to nonprofit organizations technical assistance appropriate to assist such organizations in—

(1) sponsoring housing projects for veterans assisted under programs administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development;

(2) fulfilling the planning and application processes and requirements necessary under such programs administered by the Department; and

(3) assisting veterans in obtaining housing or homeless assistance under programs administered by the Department.

(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—An eligible entity under this subsection is a nonprofit entity or organization having such expertise as the Secretary shall require in providing technical assistance to providers of services for veterans.

(c) SELECTION OF GRANT RECIPIENTS.—The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall establish criteria for selecting applicants for grants under this section to receive such grants and shall select applicants based upon such criteria.

(d) FUNDING.—Of any amounts made available in fiscal year 2008 or any fiscal year thereafter to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for salaries and expenses, \$1,000,000 shall be available, and shall remain available until expended, for grants under this section.

#### SEC. 8. ANNUAL REPORT ON HOUSING ASSISTANCE TO VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than December 31 each year, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall submit a report on the activities of the Department of Housing and Urban Development relating to veterans during such year to the following:

(1) The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate.

(2) The Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate.

(3) The Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

(4) The Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives.

(5) The Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(6) The Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(7) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(b) CONTENTS.—Each report required under subsection (a) shall include the following information with respect to the year for which the report is submitted:

(1) The number of very low-income veteran families provided assistance under the program of supportive housing for very low-income veteran families under section 3, the socioeconomic characteristics of such families, the types of assistance provided such families, and the number, types, and locations of owners of housing assisted under such section.

(2) The number of homeless veterans provided assistance under the program of housing choice vouchers for homeless veterans

under section 8(o)(19) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)) (as amended by section 4), the socioeconomic characteristics of such homeless veterans, and the number, types, and locations of entities contracted under such section to administer the vouchers.

(3) A summary description of the special considerations made for veterans under public housing agency plans submitted pursuant to section 5A of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437c-1) and under comprehensive housing affordability strategies submitted pursuant to section 105 of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 12705).

(4) A description of the technical assistance provided to organizations pursuant to grants under section 7.

(5) A description of the activities of the Special Assistant for Veterans Affairs.

(6) A description of the efforts of the Department of Housing and Urban Development to coordinate the delivery of housing and services to veterans with other Federal departments and agencies, including the Department of Defense, Department of Justice, Department of Labor, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Veterans Affairs, Interagency Council on Homelessness, and the Social Security Administration.

(7) The cost to the Department of Housing and Urban Development of administering the programs and activities relating to veterans.

(8) Any other information that the Secretary considers relevant in assessing the programs and activities of the Department of Housing and Urban Development relating to veterans.

#### (c) ASSESSMENT OF HOUSING NEEDS OF VERY LOW-INCOME VETERAN FAMILIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For the first report submitted pursuant to subsection (a) and every fifth report thereafter, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall—

(A) conduct an assessment of the housing needs of very low-income veteran families (as such term is defined in section 3); and

(B) shall include in each such report findings regarding such assessment.

(2) CONTENT.—Each assessment under this subsection shall include—

(A) conducting a survey of, and direct interviews with, a representative sample of very low-income veteran families (as such term is defined in section 3) to determine past and current—

(i) socioeconomic characteristics of such veteran families;

(ii) barriers to such veteran families obtaining safe, quality, and affordable housing;

(iii) levels of homelessness among such veteran families; and

(iv) levels and circumstances of, and barriers to, receipt by such veteran families of rental housing and homeownership assistance; and

(B) such other information that the Secretary determines, in consultation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and national nongovernmental organizations concerned with veterans, homelessness, and very low-income housing, may be useful to the assessment.

(3) CONDUCT.—If the Secretary contracts with an entity other than the Department of Housing and Urban Development to conduct the assessment under this subsection, such entity shall be a nongovernmental organization determined by the Secretary to have appropriate expertise in quantitative and qualitative social science research.

(4) FUNDING.—Of any amounts made available pursuant to section 501 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1970 (42 U.S.C. 1701z-1) for programs of research, studies, testing, or demonstration relating to the

mission or programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development for any fiscal year in which an assessment under this subsection is required pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection, \$1,000,000 shall be available until expended for costs of the assessment under this subsection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) and the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and to insert extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3329, the Homes for Heroes Act, and at this time I would like to thank the House leadership for allowing this legislation to come before the House expeditiously. I also thank Chairman FRANK, the chairperson of the Financial Services Committee, for his outstanding service in helping us with this piece of legislation. Congresswoman WATERS, who chairs the Subcommittee on Housing, is to be given a debt of gratitude as well, because without her help we could not have brought the bill to fruition. The staff has been outstanding. Ranking Member CAPITO on the Housing Subcommittee has been of great benefit to us, as well as Congressman BACHUS, who is the ranking member on the full committee.

Mr. Speaker, of the many supporting organizations, I would like to especially thank the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. They have been with us and they have assisted us through the process. The cosponsor and co-lead, Congressman MICHAEL MICHAUD, deserves a special expression of appreciation. He is the Chair of the Veterans Affairs Health Subcommittee. Finally, we thank the 53 cosponsors, and we appreciate greatly the bipartisan support that this legislation enjoys.

Mr. Speaker, we live in the greatest and richest country in the world. We literally have housing for our astronauts, who are in space. We have housing for our farm animals, called barns. We have housing for our cars, called garages. One of every 110 persons is a millionaire. However, I am sorry to report, Mr. Speaker, that as many are sleeping in the suites of life, too many are sleeping on the streets of life.

Mr. Speaker, we have 800,000 homeless people in our country. One-fourth, or 200,000 of them, are veterans. Approximately 16,000 veterans are homeless in the State of Texas, 2,400 in my



City of Houston. Veterans make up 11 percent of the population, yet are 25 percent of the homeless. 1.5 million veterans have incomes below poverty, and that would be \$10,787 per year for a single person who happens to be a veteran. 643,000 veterans have incomes below 50 percent of poverty. That would be \$5,394 per year for a single veteran. Of the homeless veterans, nearly one-half are Vietnam vets. One-half have mental illnesses. Two-thirds suffer from alcohol or substance abuse. Fifty-six percent are African American or Latino.

The passage of this legislation will help to end homelessness among our veterans. More specifically, this legislation would establish the position of Special Assistant for Veterans Affairs within HUD. This special assistant within HUD would coordinate the services of homeless veterans, serve as a liaison to the Department of Veterans Affairs, to the States and to local officials, as well as nonprofit organizations.

This bill would establish a \$200 million assistance program for permanent supportive housing and services to low income veterans. Low income veterans are those who are at 50 percent of the area median income. This bill would expand the highly successful HUD Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program known as the HUD-VASH program. This bill authorizes 20,000 such vouchers on an annual basis.

The bill authorizes \$1 million in HUD grants to assist housing and service providers with the execution of their projects. This bill would require HUD to submit a comprehensive report annually on the needs of veterans who are homeless and give an indication as to what steps are being taken under this program to eliminate homelessness among our veteran population.

Mr. Speaker, some may say that this is too little. Others may say that it is too much. It is our position that we do this before it is too late for many of our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I will reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3329, the Homes for Heroes Act offered by the gentleman from Texas, Mr. GREEN.

In the week after our Nation celebrated its 232nd birthday, it is important that we take time to properly recognize the sacrifices of our Nation's veterans and those service men and women who are currently defending our freedoms and liberties in theaters across the world.

Like many of my colleagues, I have been to Walter Reed to visit our wounded warriors who have been injured in battle, and I am always touched by their spirit and courage. It goes without saying that our Nation and government must provide these veterans with the tools to succeed once they leave the military and the benefits they deserve for the sacrifices that they have made in the name of freedom.

This legislation improves one important aspect for our veterans, especially those who suffer from long-term physical and mental disabilities: That is access to affordable housing. The Veterans Administration is the only Federal agency that provides substantial hands-on assistance directly to homeless individuals, homeless veterans. Although limited to veterans and their dependants, the VA's major homeless specific programs constitute the largest integrated network of homeless treatment and assistance services in this country.

The Department's homeless veterans programs were first authorized in 1987 and have grown and developed during that time. The program offers a number of services that include outreach to veterans living on the streets and who otherwise would not seek assistance, long-term sheltered transitional assistance and supportive permanent housing.

According to the VA, about one-third of the adult homeless population are veterans. That is staggering, I believe, with current population estimates suggesting about 154,000 veterans are homeless on any given night. Many other veterans are considered near homeless or at risk because of their poverty, lack of support from family and friends and dismal living conditions in cheap hotels or overcrowded and substandard housing.

This legislation requires HUD to create a position within the Department to serve as a liaison to the Veterans Affairs Department. A Special Assistant for Veterans Affairs would ensure veterans receive proper access to HUD's housing assistance programs, coordinate all HUD programs and activities pertaining to veterans, and act as a liaison between HUD and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. GREEN's legislation also requires, as he noted, that HUD provide 20,000 rental vouchers for homeless veterans. It authorizes \$200 million in fiscal year 2008 and such sums as may be necessary for each subsequent fiscal year. It also requires the Department to maintain a constant level of funding in coordination with rising home costs. The measure allows family members of a veteran receiving a housing voucher to maintain the voucher and the home after the veteran's death.

The bill authorizes grants to nonprofits that sponsor housing projects for veterans making less than 50 percent of the median income of an area, assists veterans in obtaining housing or homeless assistance, and assists veterans with the plan and application process for HUD assistance programs. It also includes language to assure that any voucher program would not inhibit low income tax credits that are already in place.

I would like to thank Mr. GREEN for offering this legislation and for his efforts to improve housing for our veterans.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield such time as he may consume to my colleague the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS).

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise today in support of H.R. 3329, the Homes for Heroes Act, because it is past time to address the rapid growth of our Nation's homeless veterans population and enhance affordable housing opportunities for returning veterans. Permanent supportive housing remains the number one unmet need of veterans. The National Alliance to End Homelessness found that nearly half a million of our Nation's veterans are severely rent-burdened and devote more than 50 percent of their income to rent.

The bill will strengthen housing opportunities for our returning veterans by creating a Special Assistant for Veterans Affairs within the Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD, and authorizes \$200 million for new construction of low income and homeless veteran housing and 20,000 new vouchers for homeless veterans. We have a responsibility to assure the well-being of these brave men and women, true American heroes, when they return home.

Veterans are twice as likely to be chronically homeless compared to other Americans. Additional obstacles include physical and mental health-related problems, weakened social networks, high stressful occupational demands and non-transferability of skills to civilian jobs, which create the need for additional supportive services for this population.

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In fact, the Alliance to End Homelessness concluded veterans make up a disproportionate share of the homeless population. While veterans only represent 11 percent of the civilian population age 18 and over, they account for nearly 26 percent of our Nation's homeless population. This is clearly unacceptable. This disparity is especially concerning as our Nation's troops in Iraq and Afghanistan return home.

While the VA currently has over 19,000 transitional housing beds for homeless veterans and has invested in new initiatives specifically targeting at-risk populations, various Government Accountability Office, GAO, and VA studies indicate that the VA still lacks the capacity to provide timely access to health services for veterans at risk for homelessness.

I believe this bill will enhance supportive and affordable housing opportunities for veterans, and I urge all my colleagues to support this bill.

I thank the ranking member for yielding me time.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3329, the Homes for Heroes Act.

With all the problems veterans face today, too often Congress forgets the simple things, such as housing.

After members of our military have honorably served this great nation and want to start a life with their family, our country should provide them with the assistance to do so.

When some of our veterans return from battle, their fight continues. Whether it is wrestling with the effects of PTSD or struggling to reintegrate into civilian life, it is Congress's responsibility to help them and that is what the Homes for Heroes Act does.

I am very proud of what this bill accomplishes, such as the assistance provided to low-income vets, the HUD-VA liaison created for state and local governments, and the additional services provided to veterans with mental and addictive disorders.

As the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee under Veterans Affairs, I am aware of the unique issues facing veterans, and I thank Representative GREEN for introducing this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3329.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3329, the "Homes for Heroes Act." I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and to support our troops in their efforts to obtain homes. I thank my friend Congressman AL GREEN for this thoughtful legislation.

This important piece of legislation amends the Department of Housing and Urban Development Act to establish in the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) a Special Assistant for Veterans Affairs to: (1) ensure veteran access to HUD housing and homeless assistance programs; (2) coordinate all HUD programs and activities relating to veterans; and (3) serve as a HUD liaison with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

This legislation, directs the HUD Secretary to provide assistance to private nonprofit organizations and consumer cooperatives to expand the supply of supportive housing for very low-income veteran families (that is, families with incomes not exceeding 50 percent of the area median income).

H.R. 3326, amends the United States Housing Act of 1937 to: (1) make housing rental vouchers available to homeless veterans; and (2) include veterans in public housing planning.

Excludes veterans' benefits from income for purposes of HUD assisted housing rental determinations.

This legislation requires the Secretary to: (1) make grants to nonprofit entities for technical assistance in sponsoring HUD housing projects for veterans; and (2) report annually to specified congressional committees and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on HUD activities relating to veterans.

I firmly believe that we should celebrate our veterans, and I remain committed, as a Member of Congress, to ensuring that we respect our veterans. Veterans have kept their promise to serve our nation; they have willingly risked their lives to protect the country we all love. We must now ensure that we keep our promises to our veterans.

Currently, there are 25 million veterans in the United States. There are more than 1,633,000 veterans living in Texas and more than 32,000 veterans living in my Congressional district alone. I hope we will all take the time to show appreciation to those who have answered the call to duty. As the great British leader Winston Churchill famously stated,

"Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

With the approval of legislation on June 1, 1954, November 11th became a day to honor American veterans of all wars. Later that same year, on October 8th, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, himself a decorated veteran of war, issued the first "Veterans Day Proclamation" which stated in part: "In order to insure proper and widespread observance of this anniversary, all veterans, all veterans' organizations, and the entire citizenry will wish to join hands in the common purpose." It was with that enduring spirit that America celebrated the first Veterans Day.

We must always remember the debt that we owe our fallen veterans that have paid the ultimate sacrifice. From the four surviving World War I veterans known to be living in the United States, to the over 300,000 veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom we expect to see by the end of 2008. Our gratitude must continue to be unwavering to our soldiers and veterans.

In the words of President John F. Kennedy, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." It is not simply enough to sing the praises of our nation's great veterans; I firmly believe that we must demonstrate by our actions how proud we are of our American heroes.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation. I believe it is necessary for the nation to act now so that we all can pay respect, tribute, and homage to the lives of the armed services veterans who have fought to keep America free and have fought to make sure that all people and nations partake in the universal freedoms that we find so important in this country. These individuals have given so much and have paid us the ultimate sacrifice: the sacrifice of their lives. The least that we can do, is ensure that these veterans are able to secure homes when they return home from battle. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3329, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### AMERICA'S BEAUTIFUL NATIONAL PARKS QUARTER DOLLAR COIN ACT OF 2008

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6184) to provide

for a program for circulating quarter dollar coins that are emblematic of a national park or other national site in each State, the District of Columbia, and each territory of the United States, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6184

*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 "America's Beautiful National Parks Quarter Dollar Coin Act of 2008".

#### TITLE I—NATIONAL SITE QUARTER DOLLARS

##### SEC. 101. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds as follows:

(1) Yellowstone National Park was established by an Act signed by President Ulysses S. Grant on March 1, 1872, as the Nation's first national park.

(2) The summer and autumn of 1890 saw the establishment of a number of national sites:

(A) August 19: Chickamauga and Chattanooga established as national military parks in Georgia and Tennessee.

(B) August 30: Antietam established as a national battlefield site in Maryland.

(C) September 25: Sequoia National Park established in California.

(D) September 27: Rock Creek Park established in the District of Columbia.

(E) October 1: General Grant National Park established in California (and subsequently incorporated in Kings Canyon National Park).

(F) October 1: Yosemite National Park established in California.

(3) Theodore Roosevelt was this nation's 26th President and is considered by many to be our "Conservationist President".

(4) As a frequent visitor to the West, Theodore Roosevelt witnessed the virtual destruction of some big game species and the overgrazing that destroyed the grasslands and with them the habitats for small mammals and songbirds and conservation increasingly became one of his major concerns.

(5) When he became President in 1901, Roosevelt pursued this interest in conservation by establishing the first 51 Bird Reserves, 4 Game Preserves, and 150 National Forests.

(6) He also established the United States Forest Service, signed into law the creation of 5 National Parks, and signed the Act for the Preservation of American Antiquities in 1906 under which he proclaimed 18 national monuments.

(7) Approximately 230,000,000 acres of area within the United States was placed under public protection by Theodore Roosevelt.

(8) Theodore Roosevelt said that nothing short of defending this country in wartime "compares in importance with the great central task of leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us".

(9) The National Park Service was created by an Act signed by President Woodrow Wilson on August 25, 1916.

(10) The National Park System comprises 391 areas covering more than 84,000,000 acres in every State (except Delaware), the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

(11) The sites or areas within the National Park System vary widely in size and type from vast natural wilderness to birthplaces of Presidents to world heritage archaeology sites to an African burial ground memorial in Manhattan and include national parks,