FEDERAL REAL PROPERTY DISPOSAL ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 19, 2008

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5787, the Federal Real Property Disposal Enhancement Act, a bill that I introduced with Representative JIMMY DUNCAN of Tennessee to address the disincentives that are currently keeping some agencies from disposing of properties they no longer need.

Last June the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released a report which found that there is currently a backlog of more than 21,000 excess and surplus Federal properties worth a total of $18 billion. Holding onto these properties has serious implications for the American taxpayer, as it costs Federal agencies millions of dollars per year to maintain and secure properties that are underutilized or simply unneeded.

Investigations by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) have also pointed out that the administrative requirements and costs of preparing a property for transfer or sale continue to hamper some agencies' efforts to address their backlog of unneeded properties. Because it can be difficult for agencies to secure the resources that they need to prepare a property for disposal, these costs serve as a disincentive because it makes more sense, in the short-term, for them to simply hold onto a property, particularly if they do not expect to receive the proceeds of a transfer or sale.

Fortunately, over the past several years the administration and Federal agencies have made progress toward strategically managing Federal real property by establishing asset management plans, standardizing data reporting, and adopting performance measures.

But there are also commonsense steps that we can take now to ensure that Federal agencies have the proper incentives to dispose of property they no longer need. H.R. 5787 is designed to do just this.

First, the legislation would move to help agencies deal with the administrative requirements and costs of preparing underutilized properties for transfer or sale by allowing the General Services Administration (GSA), in cooperation with agencies, to use its resources and expertise to cover these up-front costs and help agencies ensure that title records, property descriptions, and environmental clearances are in order so that properties can be classified as excess. GSA would then be reimbursed for the costs it incurs from the proceeds that agencies receive from the transfer or sale of such properties.

The legislation would also provide agencies with another incentive to reduce their inventory of unneeded properties by allowing them to keep all the proceeds received from the sale of surplus properties, which would then be available, subject to appropriations, to fund future asset management and disposal activities.

Many landholding agencies, including the three largest landholding agencies—the Department of Defense, GSA, and the Department of Veterans Affairs—already have the authority to retain 100 percent of proceeds, and it has been shown to be a tremendous incentive for some agencies to dispose of property they no longer need.

H.R. 5787 would simply extend this authority to landholding agencies that currently do not have it, and allow the proceeds agencies would receive to be used for future disposal and asset management efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage my colleagues to support this common sense effort to help Federal agencies more efficiently manage their Federal real property assets. As we are all well aware, the Federal government faces many short and long-term fiscal challenges, which is why we must increase our efforts both to manage our existing assets more effectively and to significantly reduce the backlog of underutilized and unused Federal properties. We should no longer waste precious taxpayer funds on maintaining and holding properties that are not needed.

NATIONAL MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY

SPEECH OF

HON. STEVE CHABOT

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 19, 2008

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 1142, a resolution recognizing May 25, 2008, as National Missing Children's Day.

As a parent, I know first hand the fears that we all experience as they relate to the safety of our children. These fears are compounded with the growing use of the Internet by our kids. Now, predators aren't limited by physical barriers, but can enter our homes, schools, and communities without us ever knowing.

With more than 800,000 children reported missing each year and 2,000 each day, we can't afford to let any tool go unused. We must recommit ourselves to ensuring that families, schools, neighborhoods, and law enforcement have the resources necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of our Nation's children. Recognizing May 25, 2008, as National Missing Children's Day provides the Nation with this opportunity.

I urge my colleagues to support our kids and families by passing this resolution.