

school seats; 2.9 million square feet of community health center space serving 350,000 patients; and helped create 25,000 jobs for low-income individuals.

In my home State of New York, NCB Capital Impact has played a significant role in providing housing finance. In fact, NCB has participated in more than 600 loans in my district alone. Most of these loans are for housing, including affordable housing, as well as loans for community facilities and loans to nonprofit organizations like the Council of New York Cooperatives and Condominiums. Together, these groups are able to provide assisted living, affordable housing and services to the frail and elderly.

Presently, NCB Capital Impact is working with five community-based organizations to help finance 17 projects that will create 558 housing units. Despite their good work in serving low-income communities and disadvantaged populations, NCB Capital Impact is not eligible for assistance authorized under the Community Development Banking and Financial Institutions Act of 1994, which is administered by the CDFI Fund. The fund has ruled it cannot certify NCB Capital Impact as a CDFI because of the corporate structure of its parent, NCB. In short, NCB Capital Impact is shut off from critical sources of financial awards that are needed to maintain their housing and community development efforts.

The interest of NCB Capital Impact in gaining CDFI certification is twofold. First, it has a track record that is comparable to other organizations that receive CDFI status; its mission is dedicated to working with low-income populations and communities. Second, increasingly in the community development finance field, CDFI certification is viewed as a Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval in working with other Federal agencies and other public and private institutions.

I think that it is important to note that this legislation does not guarantee the NCB any assistance, nor does it authorize additional amounts for the CDFI program. All it does is allow NCB to better fulfill its mission by allowing them to compete for these funds. As such, the Congressional Budget Office has determined that this legislation will have no significant impact on the Federal budget.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this technical amendment to the NCB statute so that the nonprofit, mission-driven NCB Capital Impact may continue to provide services to distressed and underserved communities throughout New York and throughout the entire country.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

H.R. 1674 makes a small but significant fix to the National Consumer Cooperative Bank that will have the effect of expanding financial services options to low-income communities.

The bill would give NCB Capital Impact, the nonprofit subsidiary of NCB, the opportunity to compete with hundreds of other institutions for grants from the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund administered by the Treasury Department. Today, NCB Capital Impact is not eligible for the CDFI grants even though it provides housing, education, health care, cultural centers, small businesses, and social services in distressed areas. The mission of the CDFI Fund is to expand the capacity of financial institutions to provide credit, capital and financial services to underserved populations.

So long as the activities of the NCB Capital Impact meet the letter and the spirit of the CDFI's eligibility requirements, their organizational structure should not preclude them from receiving those dollars. This bill would allow NCB Capital Impact to compete for grants and continue providing economic development support to low- and moderate-income communities.

In closing, I would like to commend the sponsor of this legislation, Mrs. MALONEY, for her work on this bill. I am in support of her statement and would urge my colleagues also to support that.

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

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1674.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HOMES FOR HEROES ACT OF 2009

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 403) to provide housing assistance for very low-income veterans.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 403

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 2009".

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 Homes for Heroes Act of 2009; 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 (12 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).

(1) DEVELOPMENT COST LIMITATIONS.—

(A) 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 2009 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 2009 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”;

(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 appropriate 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 (12 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 2009 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 gentleman 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 and include extraneous materials on H.R. 403.

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 would like to thank Representative CAPITO. She is an active member of the Financial Services Committee, and I thank her for managing today.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank Representative MICHAUD—also known as MICHAUD, depending on where you're from—for his outstanding work in helping with this bill. He is a cosponsor. I thank the ranking member, SPENCER BACHUS. Of course I thank the chairman of the Financial Services Committee, Mr. BARNEY FRANK. I also would like to thank the Housing Subcommittee Chair who has worked closely with me on this project, Representative MAXINE WATERS.

Mr. Speaker, the question may be posed in the mind of someone as to why we should pass the Homes for Heroes Act. I would like to answer this question. We need to pass this bill because, while many of us are sleeping in the sweats of life, too many of our veterans are sleeping in the streets of life. We need to pass it because, while many of us have homes and good jobs, too many of our veterans are homeless, with no jobs at all. We must pass this piece of legislation because America can't continue to be the home of the free and the land of the brave if too many of our brave veterans continue to be homeless.

Mr. Speaker, the statistics are shocking; they literally shock the conscience. Veterans are 9 percent of the population and more than 25 percent of the homeless. On any given night, 131,000 veterans are homeless, and 300,000 veterans will experience homelessness at some point in the course of 1 year. One-half of the veterans who are homeless suffer from mental illness, two-thirds suffer from alcohol or substance abuse. About 47 percent of homeless veterans are Vietnam veterans.

In Texas, there are about 16,000 homeless veterans. In my city of Houston, Texas, we have about 2,500 homeless veterans. Per the National Alliance to End Homelessness, 467,000 veterans spend more than 50 percent of their income on rent; 1.5 million veterans have incomes below the poverty line; and 643,000 veterans have incomes below 50 percent of the poverty line. Mr. Speaker, America needs to pass Homes for the Heroes because our veterans need homes.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 403 would establish a Special Assistant for Veteran Affairs within HUD. It would give this person the authority to coordinate services for homeless veterans. And this would be with the States, with local authorities, and with nonprofit organizations as well.

This bill establishes a \$200 million assistance program in HUD for veterans

for supportive housing and services for low-income veterans. It expands the very popular and very successful HUD Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program, authorizing 20,000 vouchers annually when funded. It authorizes \$1 million in HUD grants to assist housing providers to help them provide the supportive services and the planning necessary to fulfill the needs of our veterans.

This bill would require HUD to submit an annual comprehensive report to Congress on homelessness among the veteran population. And this bill will do what is necessary as a great first step to ending homelessness among our veterans population. This bill is supported by 12 anti-homelessness and veterans organizations.

Mr. Speaker, if America is to continue to be the land of the free, America must provide homes for the brave.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, Mr. GREEN, for his passion and his devotion to this bill, Homes for Heroes Act, as he has been shepherding this now for several Congresses. I appreciate his support, and I want to lend my support as well.

As we know, the Iraq and Afghanistan wars have placed new pressures on veterans services and housing. The Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that it has served approximately 916 returning veterans in its homeless programs and has identified over 2,900 more as being at risk of homelessness. The Congressional Research Service, in its report entitled "Veterans and Homelessness," explains why both male and female veterans are overrepresented in the homeless population.

This country simply must do a better job of providing for our veterans. For this reason, I rise in strong support of H.R. 403, the Homes for Heroes Act of 2009.

As my colleague explained, this legislation will help to expand the supply of housing for very low-income veterans and increase the number of vouchers for homeless veterans. It establishes a Special Assistant for Veteran Affairs at the Department of Housing and Urban Development to ensure veterans receive proper access to HUD's housing assistance programs, coordinate all HUD programs and activities pertaining to veterans, and would act as a liaison between HUD and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

In an effort to expand the supply of veterans housing, the bill authorizes appropriations for housing assistance for very low-income and homeless veterans. A very low-income veteran family has an income not exceeding 50 percent of an area's median income. A \$200 million authorization would provide capital advances and planning grants to private nonprofits and consumer cooperatives for the construction and rehabilitation of permanent supportive

housing for very low-income veterans. The \$200 million authorization may also be used for project rental assistance.

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The bill also authorizes appropriations necessary to provide 20,000 additional housing choice vouchers for homeless veterans for fiscal year 2009 and each year thereafter.

Other provisions in the bill include the exclusion of veterans benefits amounts from rental subsidy calculations for all federally funded housing programs and an authorization of \$1 million in technical assistance grants to nonprofits who provide veterans housing or provide assistance to veterans seeking housing.

All in all this bill, I believe, will help to address an area or an issue of homelessness in our veterans population, one that we must not allow to continue. H.R. 403 is similar to H.R. 3329, which passed the House in the 110th Congress by a vote of 412-9.

I urge my colleagues' support.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I thank the gentlelady for her generous comments and her appeal to colleagues to support this important piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit for the RECORD a letter that has been signed by 16 organizations that are supporting this piece of legislation.

JUNE 12, 2009.

Hon. AL GREEN,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: We are writing to express our overwhelming support for H.R. 403, the Homes for Heroes Act of 2009, legislation that would provide housing assistance for very low-income veterans. We urge the House of Representatives to pass this bill on Tuesday, June 16, 2009.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) officials recently reported on any given night, 131,000 veterans are homeless. Veterans are at a greater risk of becoming homeless due to health problems (post traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse issues, mental health disorders), economic issues (extremely low or no livable income), and a shortage of affordable housing.

While most currently homeless veterans served during prior conflicts or in peacetime, the newest generation of combat veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom (OEF-OIF), both men and women, are returning home and suffering from war related conditions that may put them at risk for homelessness. A growing trend in homelessness among these new veterans points to a need to develop a coordinated approach to reduce and ultimately eliminate homelessness among all veterans.

Your bill, H.R. 403, the "Homes for Heroes Act of 2009," will provide shelter for homeless veteran families and help prevent low-income families from falling into homelessness. The undersigned organizations are pleased the following legislative actions are contained in this bill:

1. Establish the position of Special Assistant for Veterans Affairs within the Depart-

ment of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

2. Establish permanent supportive housing and services for very low-income veterans and their families through a \$200 million assistance program.

3. Authorize HUD to provide housing assistance to private nonprofit organizations and consumer cooperatives to expand the supply of permanent affordable housing.

4. Require HUD to coordinate with the VA to provide supportive services tailored to the needs of the very low-income veteran families occupying supportive housing.

5. Expand the highly successful HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program, authorizing 20,000 vouchers annually and making the program permanent.

6. Place additional priority on veterans and require all local public housing agencies to develop plans to address the needs of homeless veterans.

7. Authorize \$1 million in HUD grants to assist housing and service providers to execute their housing projects for very low-income veteran families.

8. Require HUD to submit a comprehensive annual report to Congress on the housing needs of homeless veterans.

To meet the current and future needs of our Nation's most vulnerable veterans, we ask the House of Representatives to pass H.R. 403, the Homes for Heroes Act of 2009. Supporting this historic veteran homelessness prevention initiative will be a giant step forward towards ending veteran homelessness in America.

Corporation for Supportive Housing
Goodwill Industries International
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Military Officers Association of America
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Association for Black Veterans
National Coalition for Homeless Veterans
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty

National Leased Housing Association
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National Policy and Advocacy Council on Homelessness
Vietnam Veterans of America
American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging
Services For the Aging
National Association of Affordable Housing Lenders
National Equity Fund

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to now yield 2 minutes to Ms. BROWN-Waite from Florida, an advocate for veterans all across the board and certainly housing for our veterans.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 403, the Homes For Heroes Act of 2009.

For our Nation's veterans, the fight does not end when they return from battle. Readjusting to civilian life and coping with the physical and psychological effects of war can be a daunting task. Current reports estimate that about 154,000 veterans are homeless on any given night. This statistic is a tragedy. However, Congress is now taking a step in the right direction.

The Homes For Heroes Act creates a Special Assistant for Veterans Affairs within HUD, provides at least 20,000 low-income veterans with rental vouchers, and aids veterans in applying

for and obtaining assistance. Additionally, I'm proud that this bill includes help for veterans with mental health disorders and assists low-income veterans and their families with personal and financial planning, obtaining veterans benefits, and vocational training.

As a former member of the Committee on Veterans Affairs, I am aware of the many unique issues that our veterans face. The Homes For Heroes Act will supply our veterans with the tools that they need to reintegrate into society, and I thank Representative Green for introducing this bill.

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I close by urging my colleagues to support this piece of legislation and to please consider the fact that our veterans have been there for us; this is an opportunity for us to be there for them.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 403, which will increase support for our veterans by providing them with housing benefits. I thank my colleague Representative AL GREEN for introducing this important legislation, as well as the many cosponsors for their support. I thank Arthur D. Sidney for his assistance on this matter.

I stand in support of this legislation because it assists those men and women who have sacrificed so much for this country. This bill will establish a Special Assistant for Veterans Affairs within the Department of Housing and Urban Development. In doing so, the office will ensure that veterans and their families that are most in need will receive housing benefits and get them off the streets. The office will build upon the existing infrastructure already in place among public and private institutions by granting housing vouchers, providing public housing, and coordinating efforts across HUD programs and activities.

Nearly a quarter of the homeless population in the United States is comprised of veterans and their families. The National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and clients found that 18% of homeless male veterans participating in homeless assistance programs reported that their latest episode of homelessness lasted 3 months or less, compared to 28% of their male nonveteran counterparts. This disproportionate burden on the men and women that have served in the Armed Forces is a grave injustice. We must continue working to increase support for our veterans in recognition of their ultimate sacrifice—risking their lives to serve this great country. Please join me in supporting our veterans by voting for this legislation.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 403, the Homes for Heroes Act of 2009. I am proud to be a cosponsor and would like to recognize the leadership of Representative AL GREEN who introduced this very important bill last Congress, which passed the House Floor. This bill upholds the principle that those who served our Nation honorably should not have to live on the streets or in shelters.

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, approximately 150,000 to 200,000 American veterans are living on the

streets or in shelters. And nearly 300,000 veterans may experience homelessness at some point during the course of a year.

The Housing and Community Opportunity Subcommittee, which I chair, held a hearing on this bill during the 110th Congress and heard from witnesses how the return of veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan would greatly increase demand for affordable housing and social services in communities across the country.

Since then, the economy has only worsened and the number of veterans returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan continues to increase. Furthermore, many veterans are at greater risk of becoming homeless because they struggle with health and economic issues, while facing a shortage of affordable housing.

That is why H.R. 403 is so important. This bill would create a new program where none existed before to develop permanent supportive housing for the homeless veterans who need it. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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. 403.

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. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

AWARDING A CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO THE WOMEN AIRFORCE SERVICE PILOTS

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 614) to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Women Airforce Service Pilots ("WASP").

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 614

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

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) the Women Airforce Service Pilots of WWII, known as the "WASP", were the first women in history to fly American military aircraft;

(2) more than 60 years ago, they flew fighter, bomber, transport, and training aircraft in defense of America's freedom;

(3) they faced overwhelming cultural and gender bias against women in nontraditional roles and overcame multiple injustices and inequities in order to serve their country;

(4) through their actions, the WASP eventually were the catalyst for revolutionary

reform in the integration of women pilots into the Armed Services;

(5) during the early months of World War II, there was a severe shortage of combat pilots;

(6) Jacqueline Cochran, America's leading woman pilot of the time, convinced General Hap Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Forces, that women, if given the same training as men, would be equally capable of flying military aircraft and could then take over some of the stateside military flying jobs, thereby releasing hundreds of male pilots for combat duty;

(7) the severe loss of male combat pilots made the necessity of utilizing women pilots to help in the war effort clear to General Arnold, and a women's pilot training program was soon approved;

(8) it was not until August 1943, that the women aviators would receive their official name;

(9) General Arnold ordered that all women pilots flying military aircraft, including 28 civilian women ferry pilots, would be named "WASP", Women Airforce Service Pilots;

(10) more than 25,000 American women applied for training, but only 1,830 were accepted and took the oath;

(11) exactly 1,074 of those trainees successfully completed the 21 to 27 weeks of Army Air Forces flight training, graduated, and received their Army Air Forces orders to report to their assigned air base;

(12) on November 16, 1942, the first class of 29 women pilots reported to the Houston, Texas Municipal Airport and began the same military flight training as the male Army Air Forces cadets were taking;

(13) due to a lack of adequate facilities at the airport, 3 months later the training program was moved to Avenger Field in Sweetwater, Texas;

(14) WASP were eventually stationed at 120 Army air bases all across America;

(15) they flew more than 60,000,000 miles for their country in every type of aircraft and on every type of assignment flown by the male Army Air Forces pilots, except combat;

(16) WASP assignments included test piloting, instructor piloting, towing targets for air-to-air gunnery practice, ground-to-air anti-aircraft practice, ferrying, transporting personnel and cargo (including parts for the atomic bomb), simulated strafing, smoke laying, night tracking, and flying drones;

(17) in October 1943, male pilots were refusing to fly the B-26 Martin Marauder (known as the "Widowmaker") because of its fatality records, and General Arnold ordered WASP Director, Jacqueline Cochran, to select 25 WASP to be trained to fly the B-26 to prove to the male pilots that it was safe to fly;

(18) during the existence of the WASP—

(A) 38 women lost their lives while serving their country;

(B) their bodies were sent home in poorly crafted pine boxes;

(C) their burial was at the expense of their families or classmates;

(D) there were no gold stars allowed in their parents' windows; and

(E) because they were not considered military, no American flags were allowed on their coffins;

(19) in 1944, General Arnold made a personal request to Congress to militarize the WASP, and it was denied;

(20) on December 7, 1944, in a speech to the last graduating class of WASP, General Arnold said, "You and more than 900 of your sisters have shown you can fly wingtip to wingtip with your brothers. I salute you . . . We of the Army Air Force are proud of you. We will never forget our debt to you.";

(21) with victory in WWII almost certain, on December 20, 1944, the WASP were quietly and unceremoniously disbanded;

(22) there were no honors, no benefits, and very few "thank you's";

(23) just as they had paid their own way to enter training, they had to pay their own way back home after their honorable service to the military;

(24) the WASP military records were immediately sealed, stamped "classified" or "secret", and filed away in Government archives, unavailable to the historians who wrote the history of WWII or the scholars who compiled the history text books used today, with many of the records not declassified until the 1980s;

(25) consequently, the WASP story is a missing chapter in the history of the Air Force, the history of aviation, and the history of the United States of America;

(26) in 1977, 33 years after the WASP were disbanded, the Congress finally voted to give the WASP the veteran status they had earned, but these heroic pilots were not invited to the signing ceremony at the White House, and it was not until 7 years later that their medals were delivered in the mail in plain brown envelopes;

(27) in the late 1970s, more than 30 years after the WASP flew in World War II, women were finally permitted to attend military pilot training in the United States Armed Forces;

(28) thousands of women aviators flying support aircraft have benefitted from the service of the WASP and followed in their footsteps;

(29) in 1993, the WASP were once again referenced during congressional hearings regarding the contributions that women could make to the military, which eventually led to women being able to fly military fighter, bomber, and attack aircraft in combat;

(30) hundreds of United States service-women combat pilots have seized the opportunity to fly fighter aircraft in recent conflicts, all thanks to the pioneering steps taken by the WASP;

(31) the WASP have maintained a tight-knit community, forged by the common experiences of serving their country during war;

(32) as part of their desire to educate America on the WASP history, WASP have assisted "Wings Across America", an organization dedicated to educating the American public, with much effort aimed at children, about the remarkable accomplishments of these WWII veterans; and

(33) the WASP have been honored with exhibits at numerous museums, to include—

(A) the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC;

(B) the Women in Military Service to America Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia;

(C) the National Museum of the United States Air Force, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio;

(D) the National WASP WWII Museum, Sweetwater, Texas;

(E) the 8th Air Force Museum, Savannah, Georgia;

(F) the Lone Star Flight Museum, Galveston, Texas;

(G) the American Airpower Museum, Farmingdale, New York;

(H) the Pima Air Museum, Tucson, Arizona;

(I) the Seattle Museum of Flight, Seattle, Washington;

(J) the March Air Museum, March Reserve Air Base, California; and

(K) the Texas State History Museum, Austin, Texas.

SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of