

you make the qualified loan, you do not put the country at risk, but most important of all, you do not force everybody to FHA. That is what we are about to do because FHA is, by definition under Dodd-Frank, exempt from risk retention. All other loans are not, except those that will fall under the QRM, qualified residential mortgage. It would be a disaster for the recovery of American housing to force Americans to only one source of money to finance their home and put so much stress on the Federal Housing Administration that it collapses under the burden.

We need to be pragmatic when we look at issues facing housing. We need to be practical in taking Dodd-Frank and making it work for the American people. We need to recognize the value of private mortgage insurance, the value of good, solid underwriting and not put a risk retention in that is so high that we take most American mortgage lenders out of the business, isolated only for a few who dictate and write the parameters they want to write for housing. We are at a critical time in our recovery. Housing has hit the bottom, and it has bounced along the bottom, but it is showing some signs of coming back. Now would be the worst time to send a signal that mortgage money is going to be harder to get, the banks are going to have to hold 5 percent risk retention on even the best of loans and, worst of all, it would give the American people only one alternative for lending; that is, the Federal Housing Administration which, in and of itself, is already under a burden and stressed.

I appreciate the time tonight to bring this message to the floor that as we write the rules to promulgate the intent of the Dodd-Frank bill in terms of residential housing and finance, we be sure we do so in such a way that we meet the demands of a vibrant marketplace rather than restricting it, putting a burden on FHA, and protracting what has already been a long and difficult housing recession.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we proceed to a period of morning business with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY AND THE LETTER FROM COLONEL WILLIAM BARRET TRAVIS

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise to read the letter from COL William Barret Travis from the Alamo, something I have done every year since Senator Phil Gramm retired. He read the letter on Texas Independence Day every year after Senator Tower left office. So we have a tradition every Texas Independence Day of a Texas Senator reading the very moving speech from William Barret Travis.

Today is the 175th anniversary of our independence from Mexico.

This past Sunday, I had the honor of participating in the Washington-on-the-Brazos' 175th anniversary celebration of the Texas Declaration of Independence signing. It was a special occasion that brought together almost all the 59 signers' descendants. Thousands of proud Texans came to commemorate this most pivotal event in Texas's legacy of freedom and patriotism.

My great-great-grandfather, Charles S. Taylor, was willing to sign the document that declared Texas free from Mexico. I am humbled to occupy the Senate seat from Texas that was first held by Thomas Jefferson Rusk, who was another signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence.

Those 59 brave men did not just come in and sign a paper. They took great risk. They put their lives, their treasures, and the lives of their families on the line to do this. One hundred seventy-five years later, sometimes you do not think of how hard it was for them to declare this separation from Mexico and know that there was going to be a war fought over it because the Mexican Army was in San Antonio at the Alamo, getting ready to take the Alamo from William Barret Travis and the roughly 180 men who were there who were trying to defend that fortress.

The accounts of the revolution have been some of our most dramatic stories of patriotism in both Texas and America.

We remember the sacrifice of William Barret Travis, Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and the others who died bravely defending the Alamo against Santa Anna and his thousands of trained Mexican troops.

They were outnumbered by more than 10 to 1. For 13 days of glory, the Alamo defenders bought critical time for GEN Sam Houston, knowing they would probably never leave the mission alive.

The late Senator John Tower started the tradition of reading a stirring account by Alamo commander William Barret Travis, and Senator Gramm and now I have continued that tradition.

From within the walls of the Alamo, under siege by Santa Anna's Mexican Army of 6,000 trained soldiers, Colonel Travis wrote this letter to the people of Texas and all Americans:

Fellow Citizens and Compatriots: I am besieged with a thousand or more of the Mexi-

cans under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continual Bombardment and cannonade for 24 hours and have not lost a man. The enemy has demanded surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison is to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken. I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, and our flag still waves proudly over the wall. I shall never surrender our retreat.

Then I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism, of everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid with all dispatch. The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily and will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due his honor and that of his country—Victory or Death.

—William Barrett Travis, Lt. Col. Commander.

Steadfast to the end and independent to the core, that is the essence of Texas.

Had Colonel Travis and his men not laid down their lives in the Battle of the Alamo, Sam Houston's victory at San Jacinto just 2 months later would never have been possible. Texas's freedom might not have been won.

It is important that every generation of Texas pause to remember the patriots of the Texas revolution: each soldier who gave his life at the Alamo, Goliad, and San Jacinto; the 59 men who met at Washington-on-the-Brazos, putting their lives in danger by signing that Declaration of Independence and becoming heroes for a cause; and the bravery of the women who gave up an easier life in the East to join the struggle to make Texas the marvelous place it is today.

My great-great-grandmother was one of those brave women. She took her four children in what was called the Runaway Scrape, trying to flee eastward from Nacogdoches, where they lived, to try to escape the advancing Mexican Army and the Indian raids that were happening all over east Texas.

My great-great-grandmother lost all four of her living children during that sad and hard time for Texas. But that was not the last chapter in the revolution. She came back to Nacogdoches, met my great-great-grandfather, who was there signing the Texas Declaration of Independence, and had nine more children.

So the women also were heroes and heroines of this time.

It is my honor to memorialize the Texas legacy of freedom and patriotism in this way.

I ask unanimous consent that my speech at the Washington-on-the-Brazos celebration this past weekend be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

#### WASHINGTON-ON-THE-BRAZOS CELEBRATION REMARKS

(Delivered February 27, 2011 at Washington-on-the-Brazos Historic Site)

Thank you so much. What a great representative Lois Kolkhorst is for this area