

[Rollcall Vote No. 5 Ex.]

YEAS—94

Alexander	Gillibrand	Murphy
Ayotte	Graham	Nelson
Baldwin	Grassley	Paul
Barrasso	Hagan	Portman
Baucus	Harkin	Pryor
Begich	Hatch	Reed
Bennet	Heinrich	Reid
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Risch
Blunt	Heller	Roberts
Boozman	Hirono	Rockefeller
Boxer	Isakson	Rubio
Brown	Johanns	Sanders
Burr	Johnson (SD)	Schatz
Cantwell	Johnson (WI)	Schumer
Cardin	Kaine	Scott
Carper	King	Sessions
Casey	Kirk	Shaheen
Chambliss	Klobuchar	Shelby
Coats	Landrieu	Stabenow
Coburn	Lautenberg	Tester
Cochran	Leahy	Thune
Collins	Lee	Toomey
Coons	Levin	Udall (CO)
Corker	Manchin	Udall (NM)
Crapo	McCain	Vitter
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	McConnell	Warren
Enzi	Menendez	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Merkley	Wicker
Fischer	Mikulski	Wyden
Flake	Moran	
Franken	Murkowski	

NAYS—3

Cornyn Cruz Inhofe

ANSWERED "PRESENT"—1

Kerry

NOT VOTING—2

Hoeven Murray

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

Under the previous order, the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I know Senator KERRY will be speaking tomorrow, so I will be brief. I think I speak on behalf of every one of us here that we so admire the job Senator KERRY has done in the many different phases of his past life. We are excited he will be our Secretary of State, and for JOHN KERRY I think the best is yet to come.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

The Senator from New York.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask to speak in morning business for 15 minutes.

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

TRANSPARENCY AT HUD

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, my fellow Members know the issue of transparency is a very favorite topic of mine, and I come to the floor to speak about transparency as it relates to a very specific problem within the Department of Housing and Urban Development. It is no secret I have worked to bring greater transparency and accountability to all parts of the Federal Government because with transparency I think we get more accountability.

The voters of Iowa have entrusted me to continue my oversight responsibilities no matter who occupies the White House, and since I am a Republican, people might think I am doing it because we have a Democratic President. I think I have a reputation for being an equal opportunity overseer of the executive branch of government.

For several years I have been conducting oversight of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; everybody knows this is commonly referred to as HUD, H-U-D. HUD's core mission, according to its Web site, is to "create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality, affordable homes for all." These responsibilities have grown larger and more complex over the last few years. The mortgage crisis continues to affect the housing market.

Secretary Donovan was recently tapped to oversee the Hurricane Sandy recovery in the Northeast. HUD's yearly budget is nearly \$38 billion. Secretary Donovan should understand the importance of oversight and transparency to combat waste, fraud, and abuse. I have my doubts, though, because while I have sent dozens of letters to HUD, the Secretary has not signed a single reply. The responses I do receive are often months late and don't answer some of my most pressing concerns.

For instance, last August I sent a letter requesting information on conference spending and employee bonuses. HUD provided no conference spending documents but instead urged me to review a list of inspector general audit reports. My staff has reviewed these audit reports, but none of the audit reports provide a comprehensive review of conference spending. What is even more frustrating is that the response never referenced bonus spending at all. It seems oversight and transparency are not high priorities at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Every year HUD provides at least \$4 billion to public housing authorities across the country—along with nearly \$19 billion of section 8 vouchers. In 2009, the Obama administration provided yet another \$4 billion in stimulus funding for the housing authorities—all with little or no oversight. Public housing authorities operate in a gray area. HUD argues that they are State and local government entities, and it is thus—according to HUD—State and local governments that bear the pri-

mary responsibility for the housing authority actions. Up to 90 percent of their total funding comes from the Federal Government, thus making it HUD's responsibility to ensure the money is spent as intended.

My office went to work to determine the compensation packages for a handful of housing authorities spread around the country—mostly in the larger cities. Some authorities would not provide responses, but others responded with some troubling answers. It became apparent many executive directors were living very high on the hog. The fact is executive salaries, and other compensation at some public housing authorities, were a major problem and the amounts were then hidden from the taxpayers.

Some housing authority executive directors were earning high six-figure salaries and benefits that sometimes included a vehicle, housing allowance, and lucrative bonuses. Many of the executive directors were making more than even the Governor of the State they were located in. From Los Angeles, CA, to Boston, MA, they were raking in huge salaries. Unfortunately, no one at the HUD Headquarters in Washington, DC, was watching or even showed any concern.

In Philadelphia, the executive director's salary was \$300,000, plus a \$45,000 bonus. He had a housing authority car and driver, and the housing authority actually paid his mortgage. This money is supposed to help people with very low incomes afford safe and decent housing, but instead they were concerned about their own salary and their own housing. The taxpayers' money was meant to go to the lower income people for safe and decent housing and all the money was not being used for that. It is not supposed to subsidize the housing costs of a government bureaucrat in Philadelphia who already makes \$345,000 a year. In Chelsea, MA, the executive director's salary was \$360,000. He cashed out weeks of unused leave and sick time while only spending about 15 full days per year in the office.

These executive directors used taxpayers' money to build and protect their own fiefdoms, usually at the expense of the poor. In Philadelphia, this included spending millions of dollars on an army of well-connected lawyers. Ironically, these lawyers were paid with taxpayers' money to thwart investigations that were aimed at safeguarding taxpayer money. The HUD Office of Inspector General had done battle with these armies of lawyers over and over around the entire country, and the taxpayers are funding both sides of the fight.

In addition, no-bid contracts and contracts steered toward friends seemed to be common at many housing authorities.

As early as October 2010, I asked HUD to provide salary and compensation information for executive directors at