

OCTOBER 23, 2005

Action Alert! **READ NOW!**

Save Affordable Housing Fund and Stop Anti-Democratic Restrictions on Voter Registration

Call Your Congressperson NOW! 1-866-864-NHTF (Toll-Free)

CALLS MUST BE MADE ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2005

H.R. 1461, the Federal Housing Finance Reform Act of 2005, including the new Affordable Housing Fund, is expected to come to the full U.S. House of Representatives on Wed., Oct. 26 or Thurs., Oct. 27.

Financial Services Committee Chairman Mike Oxley (R-OH) will propose a “manager’s amendment” as a substitute to H.R. 1461 that will include changes he has agreed to since the bill was voted out of committee by a vote of 65-5. These changes include **prohibitions against voter participation and other non-partisan democratic activities by non-profit organizations** that wish to apply for and use grants from the Affordable Housing Fund to build and preserve affordable housing. Additionally, nonprofits that “affiliate” with other entities that engage in the list of restrictions would also become ineligible for the AHF grants. The definition of “affiliate” is extremely broad, including sharing any office space or supplies.

These prohibitions are certainly undemocratic, likely unconstitutional, and conflict with requirements of the National Voter Registration Act, which requires many agencies that receive funding from states to conduct voter registration with their residents or clients.

Mr. Oxley has accepted the offending language to gain support from a group of ultra conservative Members of Congress who erroneously equate bricks and mortar funding for affordable housing with support for liberal and/or Democrat advocacy organizations. For example:

“I would rather burn money than give it to advocacy groups.” Rep. Tom Feeney (R-FL) quoted in *Dow Jones International News*, June 29, 2005

"It's not about affordable housing; it's about using affordable housing to fund the Democratic political machine." House GOP Aid quoted in *CQ*, Oct. 20, 2005

“Stop Barney Frank Slush Fund: H.R. 1461 would require GSEs to pump billions into left-wing organizations.” Unsigned circular to House Members

A broad coalition of housing, community development, faith-based, non-profit rights, and civil rights organizations are working to have the egregious language removed. There are three ways to do so:

- House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL) can direct its removal prior to floor consideration.

- Opponents can offer an amendment on the floor to have the language stricken, **BUT** this requires that the Rules Committee allow such an amendment to be considered. The Rules Committee meets on **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25** in the morning to make this decision.
- Opponents can offer a “motion to recommit forthwith” on the floor that essentially requires removal of the language.

Call 1-866-864-NHTF NOW and Tell Your Congressperson:

- I support the establishment of the Affordable Housing Fund in H.R. 1461 , but I have learned that language that will restrict an organization's right to engage in non-partisan democratic activities will be added to the bill when it goes to the floor for a vote.
- I oppose any language that restricts voter registration and freedom of affiliation by non-profit organizations when using their own funds.
- I urge Representative _____ to support all actions to have the offending language removed, including
 - speaking to House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL) and Rules Committee Chair David Dreier (R-CA) about its removal,
 - voting for the amendment to strike the offending language if such a vote is allowed, and
 - voting for a motion to recommit, if necessary.

You may also email your Representative using the NLIHC’s Capwiz email system at:

http://capwiz.com/nlihc/mail/oneclick_compose/?alertid=8120246

For background and other information, please visit the Action Center at www.nhtf.org

Please email Diane@nlihc.org with reports from your calls.