

Rep. Hunter offered the following concurrent resolution:

House Concurrent Resolution No. 36.

A concurrent resolution to memorialize the Congress of the United States and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development to increase efforts to encourage the development of affordable residential housing.

Whereas, The economy is creating an affordable housing crisis for millions of Americans. Prospective homebuyers are discovering that the homes they want are priced beyond their means. In many areas around the country, home prices have been rising more than twice as fast as inflation. Since 1999, the median home price has increased by 16 percent. Similarly, in some urban areas, lower- and middle-income renters are being priced completely out of the market; and

Whereas, Forty-six percent of low-income families spend more than half their income on housing. While some family incomes have risen in tandem with rising rent costs, lower-income workers are being priced out of the housing market. As a result, many affected Americans are forced to live in housing beyond their means, squeeze their families into overcrowded dwellings, or live in housing that is out of compliance with health and safety codes; and

Whereas, In 37 states, two workers earning the federal minimum wage do not make enough to afford adequate family housing. A single worker earning the minimum wage cannot afford adequate family housing in any state; and

Whereas, The number of available public housing units is rapidly declining as long-term contracts expire and owners scramble to sell properties at current market value. While public housing space shrinks, the federal government has expanded its supply of Section 8 vouchers. As a result, federal housing subsidies for low-income families are becoming useless, as not enough landlords will accept them; and

Whereas, A significant factor contributing to the lack of available housing options in many communities is the decreasing federal commitment on this key issue. Federal spending on housing has ebbed significantly in recent years. In 1978, federal spending on housing amounted to 7.5 percent of the federal budget. This spending is now reduced to approximately 1.5 percent of the federal budget today; and

Whereas, The impact of a lack of affordable housing is most acute in urban areas, and this situation contributes to many other problems in our society. In addition to the negative impact on families in our cities, the lack of housing options in urban areas, where an infrastructure already exists, also may contribute to the sprawl that many areas of the country are facing; and

Whereas, There is legislation currently before the Michigan House of Representatives that provides the tools to encourage the development of affordable residential housing in our urban areas. An example is the inclusionary zoning program, which would induce developers to construct affordable housing units and integrate them into the larger context of the community. Such inducement could take the form of incentives provided by a municipality to the developer, including but not limited to waivers of zoning requirements; local tax abatements, waiver of permit fees or land dedication; fewer required developer-provided amenities; "fast track" permitting; and the subsidization or provision of infrastructure for the developer. Federal measures to support such types of activities can ensure success in this fundamentally important issue area; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That we memorialize the Congress of the United States and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development to increase efforts to encourage the development of affordable residential housing, especially in our urban communities; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the members of the Michigan congressional delegation, and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.