

## **OPENING STATEMENT**

### **HR 3995 Housing Affordability for America Act of 2002**

**Housing and Community Opportunity Subcommittee  
Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones  
Ohio, 11th District  
4/23/02**

#### **Part II**

#### **Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones**

Good Morning Chairwoman Roukema, Vice Chairman Green, Ranking Member Frank and Members of this Subcommittee. Madame Chairwoman, I ask unanimous consent that my full statement be included in the Record.

Owning a home is the most rudimentary element of financial independence and the beginning of the wealth creation process. Furthermore, purchasing a house means more than just a place to live and a good investment; home ownership is an opportunity for a better life. For many Americans owning a house can also mean collateral for a small business loan or be the first step towards building a strong credit history. It is of vital importance that we ensure the ability of all Americans to have access to the resources that are required to realize this basic piece of the American dream.

We are here today to discuss the merits of the Housing Affordability for America Act of 2002. The intention of the Act is to increase the availability of affordable housing and expand homeownership and rental opportunities across the country. Although I support the spirit of this legislation we must make sure that we address all of the issues in full; an inadequate or flawed response to the problem will not suffice. We must go further than the mere creation of programs that can help facilitate increased home ownership in America by making sure that consistent and adequate funding exists to maintain and support these programs as well.

I am also concerned that HR 3995 as it stands now will create increased selectivity from owners of eligible properties who will only want to take the highest income earners from the pool of eligible applicants leaving many previously eligible participants in the cold.

The creation of thrifty vouchers is also of concern. Although the proposed thrifty vouchers are in theory less expensive than regular vouchers, they limit choice for consumers because of their inability to support any debt service. Prospective homebuyers will have no choice but to reside in those projects that have full capital subsidies.

Finally, I fear that the complexity of the proposed legislation creates additional burdens on the already overextended administrators. It can cost up to a quarter million dollars a year just to apply for some housing grants. We need to streamline this system to make the creation of low and moderate income housing a more attractive investment.

Each one of us owes it to our constituents and to ourselves to continue to work on the issue of affordable housing. Although HR 3995 is a step in the right direction, we

must continue to develop, augment, enhance and innovate in order provide housing for all Americans.

Thank you, Madame Chairwomen, for the opportunity to present my remarks. I look forward to working on these issues in the days and weeks to come.