

JULY 24, 2001

DEMOCRATS RALLY AGAINST CUTS IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today joined Democrats in opposing cuts in the VA/HUD Appropriations bill that will worsen our nation's affordable housing crisis. The House is slated to vote on this bill before the August recess, which includes more than \$1.8 billion in cuts for affordable housing and community development programs.

Schakowsky attended a news conference organized by U.S. Representatives John LaFalce (D-NY), ranking member on the Financial Services Committee, and Braney Frank (D-MA), ranking member on the Housing and Community Opportunity Subcommittee. Below is Schakowsky's statement:

"On behalf of the millions of families living in publicly subsidized housing, including the First Family, I wish to thank Representatives LaFalce and Frank for their leadership and for working to expand our nation's financial commitment to affordable housing."

"At a time when 5.4 million families are paying more than half of their income to live in substandard housing throughout the country, the Bush administration has decided that public housing programs are no longer a priority for our country. The VA/HUD appropriations bill approved by the Appropriations Committee cuts public housing and community development programs by \$1.8 billion."

"This budget is headed in the wrong direction. More than 34, 000 households are on the waiting list for housing vouchers in the city of Chicago, and under this budget, they're going to have to wait a long time. This bill reduces Section 8 reserves for housing authorities from 2 months to 1, cutting \$640 million. This cut will result in as many as 30,000 families losing Section 8 vouchers, according to the Congressional Budget Office. The bill also reduces the number of Fair Share incremental Section 8 vouchers from 79,000 last year to only 26,000 this year, a reduction of 78%. In addition, this bill eliminates funding for the Public Housing Drug Elimination Fund. This is a crucial initiative, and Chicago and other cities have used it successfully to combat drugs in public housing to give residents a safe place to live."

"I find it unconscionable that the Bush Administration would declare a surplus and considers our country wealthy enough to provide its richest 1% the bulk of a \$1.3 trillion tax cut, but in the same breath finds it appropriate to cut \$1.8 billion that would provide housing for our nation's most needy. No American family would ever declare a surplus if they can't afford to put a roof over their head."

"The availability of a safe, affordable home is part of the American dream. Congress must continue to work with State officials and community leaders to make this dream a

reality for all Americans. Without HUD's proper funding, many communities would be unable to implement trial programs, find solutions to our nation's housing and community problems, and ensure adequate stock of affordable housing in this nation."