

JUNE 27, 2001

**SCHAKOWSKY COSPONSORS LEGISLATION  
TO CREATE NATIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today called on Congress to take action to address our nation's affordable housing crisis. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, there are more than 5.4 million families paying more than half of their income to live in substandard housing throughout the country.

Schakowsky, a member of the Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity, joined colleagues to introduce the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act, a bill to increase affordable housing construction and provide families with a safe and decent place to live. The lead sponsors of the bill are U.S. Representatives Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Barbara Lee (D-CA).

The legislation would use some of the profits generated by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to create an affordable national housing trust fund from which states and organizations could draw to build affordable housing rental units in mixed-income locations, to construct affordable homes for low to middle income citizens, and provide rental subsidies to low-income individuals. FHA profits are expected to exceed \$26 billion over the next seven years.

Below is Schakowsky's statement at the Capitol Hill news conference:

*"I am honored to join my colleagues today to address the housing needs of millions of people across the country. An affordable, safe, and decent home must be a right for all people in the United States and the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act is an important step in our long struggle to ensure that no person is left out in the cold.*

*"In Chicago, more than 34,000 households are on the waiting list for housing vouchers. And according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, if you are a family who needs three bedrooms, then you must earn at least \$19 per hour to afford a fair market rent apartment in Chicago. If your family only needs two bedrooms, then you only have to earn \$15 per hour. And if you are really lucky and only in the market for a one-bedroom apartment, then have to earn \$13 an hour. This means that if you only earn minimum wage, then you will be working 99 hours a week to afford that apartment.*

*"We are facing a crisis and our mission is clear. Unfortunately, President Bush does not share our goals. While he is fond of referring to himself as a compassionate, his budget tells the true story. In order to pay for his tax cut for the rich and reward his special interests allies in the oil and gas industry, President Bush cuts \$2 billion from*

*our nation's housing programs. Who is going to suffer? The answer is families, seniors, and persons with disabilities struggling to find an affordable, safe, and decent place to live.*

*"This Administration and its allies in Congress have turned their backs on our nation's affordable housing crisis and other critical domestic priorities. But we are here to focus attention back on the quality of life issues our constituents want us to address like housing, healthcare, and the environment."*

Schakowsky keynoted the 11th annual Chicago Low-income Housing Trust Fund meeting. The Trust Fund, which was created by the Chicago City Council in 1989, oversees rental assistance programs designed to help owners and developers provide reduced rents to low-income residents. Last year, the Trust Fund used \$10.3 million to help 2,172 low-income households.