

JUNE 20, 2000

**SCHAKOWSKY JOINS HUD SECRETARY CUOMO, DEMOCRATIC LEADER GEPHARDT, OTHERS TO BLAST REPUBLICAN BILL FOR FAILING TO MEET NATIONAL HOUSING NEEDS**

**SCHAKOWSKY ALSO CALLS ANTI-GUN SAFETY MEASURE IN BILL DANGEROUS FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH OF AMERICANS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today said the proposed Republican funding plan falls well short of meeting our nation's growing housing needs. She joined Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Andrew Cuomo, Democratic Leader Dick Gephardt (D-MO), and other members of Congress to urge opposition to the VA, HUD appropriations bill.

The bill is \$2.5 billion below the President's request for HUD. It fails to fund 120,000 rental assistance vouchers, cuts Community Development Block Grant by nearly \$400 million, and reduces elderly housing by \$69 million.

"Congress cannot turn its back on hard working families, especially at a time when we can afford to help them meet their most basic needs. Our nation's sustained economic growth has created wealth for millions, but unfortunately, many have been left behind. It is our duty and challenge to ensure that we provide those families with the most basic needs, like a safe and affordable place to live. This Republican funding bill falls well short of meeting that challenge," said Schakowsky, who is a member of the Banking Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity.

Cities like Chicago would lose millions of dollars for economic development, community development, and housing assistance for seniors, persons with AIDS, and the homeless, under the Republican plan.

"In the City of Chicago, there are 35,000 families and seniors waiting for housing. If they all joined hands, that line would be at least 26 miles long. This bill does nothing to shorten that line. In fact it will add to it," Schakowsky added.

Schakowsky also expressed outrage at proposed amendments backed by the gun lobby. The amendments would prohibit HUD from using funds to enforce, implement, or administer the provisions of a settlement reached with gun manufacturer Smith & Wesson. Smith & Wesson agreed to manufacture weapons with child safety locks and to make changes in the design, distribution and marketing of their guns to make them safer and to help keep them out of the hands of children and criminals. In return, communities have agreed to give preference to Smith & Wesson, or any manufacturer who adheres to the HUD agreement, when procuring weapons for their local police departments.

**"This measure is a brazen attempt by some members of Congress to do the gun lobby's dirty work, and that is to punish Smith & Wesson for agreeing to take modest steps to protect our children and communities from gun violence. It is also not a secret that this amendment is intended to send a message to other gun manufacturers that they will face the consequences if they settle with the federal government," Schakowsky said.**

**"Those with blind hatred for any common sense gun safety measures are endangering the life and safety of Americans.□ This amendment is a clear example of that hatred," Schakowsky added.**