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HOUSE APPROVES BILL TO INCREASE HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOW INCOME FAMILIES AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

H.R. 1776 INCLUDES SCHAKOWSKY AMENDMENT TO ASSIST PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) called H.R.1776, the American Homeownership and Economic Opportunity Act of 2000, a wise investment in helping families realize the American dream of homeownership. Schakowsky is a member of the Banking Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity.

The House of Representatives today approved H.R. 1776. This legislation will increase homeownership opportunities, especially among persons with disabilities, low income families, school teachers, police officers and municipal employees. It authorizes 1% down payments for FHA home mortgage loans for qualifying teachers, fire fighters, and police officers. It will also provides local governments with additional flexibility and tools to help fashion homeownership programs for low-income citizens, teachers, police officers, firefighters and other municipal employees.

The legislation reauthorizes the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) at \$4.9 billion and the Home Investment Partnership (HOME) at \$1.65 billion. Other programs that will assist local governments spur homeownership and job creation were also reauthorized.

"We are in the midst of the longest economic expansion in the history of the United States. But too many families are not sharing in the wealth. HUD reported that 5.4 million households don't have decent and affordable housing. This bill gives us some power to deal with these problems and help families realize the American dream," Schakowsky said.

Included in the legislation is an amendment by Schakowsky to assist persons with disabilities. The amendment struck language that would have forced persons with disabilities facing foreclosure on a FHA mortgage loan to repay their own savings account that the government required they have before receiving rental assistance. The Banking Committee approved the amendment last month.