

Crapo Statement at Hearing on Affordable, Safe Housing Legislation
November 7, 2019

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), Chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, delivered the following remarks at a hearing entitled, “Examining Bipartisan Bills to Promote Affordable Housing Access and Safety.”

The text of Chairman Crapo’s remarks, as prepared, is below.

“Today, the Committee will receive testimony from leaders in the housing community on bipartisan opportunities this Congress to expand access to affordable housing, to improve the safety conditions within current federally-assisted housing, and to consider how we might better target some of our existing housing resources to meet unaddressed need.

“Welcome to our witnesses, and thank you for taking the time to be with us today for this important discussion.

“Joining us today are Ivory Mathews, Interim Executive Director of the Housing Authority of Columbia, South Carolina; Mark Yost, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Skyline Champion Corporation; and Peggy Bailey, Vice President for Housing Policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

“For purposes of today’s hearing, we are focused on examining three bipartisan pieces of legislation in particular that have been introduced in the 116th Congress.

“This includes S.2160 – the C.O. ALERTS Act, which was introduced in July by Senators Scott and Menendez and has the support of five Republicans and five Democrats on this Committee;

“S.1804 – the ‘HUD Manufactured Housing Modernization Act,’ which was introduced in June and has five bipartisan cosponsors, including Senators Cortez Masto, Scott, Cramer, and Smith; and

“H.R. 4300 – the ‘Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act,’ which has bipartisan interest in the Senate and is moving quickly through the House of Representatives on a strong bipartisan basis.

“The C.O. ALERTS Act would require the installation and maintenance of carbon monoxide alarms in most forms of federally-assisted housing, in any dwelling unit containing a fuel-burning appliance, fireplace, furnace, or enclosed garage.

“Currently, the majority of federally-assisted housing programs have no such requirement, despite similar requirements in 37 states and the District of Columbia.

“At least thirteen individuals living in federally-assisted housing have died due to carbon monoxide poisoning since 2003, including four in the past year.

“In April, Secretary Carson announced that HUD would undertake a rulemaking process to establish such a requirement across all of HUD’s public housing and rental-assistance programs.

“The bill would also require the HUD secretary to provide guidance to public housing agencies on how they can better educate tenants on health hazards in the home.

“The HUD Manufactured Housing Modernization Act would provide confirmation to State and local jurisdictions who receive HUD funding through programs like the Community Development Block Grant or HOME Investment Partnerships program that manufactured housing is an eligible affordable housing option for which communities can receive public funding for construction and repair.

“In other words, local jurisdictions would have a broader menu of options available as they seek to meet the unique affordable housing needs of their community.

“The Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act was advanced unanimously out of the House Financial Services Committee in September, and awaits floor consideration.

“It would authorize HUD to allocate vouchers under its Family Unification Program more directly to any public housing agency that requests an allocation in order to provide timely assistance to an eligible youth who is aging out of foster care and at risk of losing their safety net overnight.

“The bill would also extend the length of a family unification voucher by up to 24 months for eligible youth who are either participating in HUD’s Family Self-Sufficiency program, working towards a degree, or are participating in a career pathway.

“These individuals would also be eligible for any additional supportive services made available in connection with any housing assistance program of the agency that provides the voucher.

“I commend HUD and Secretary Carson for their ongoing work on a number of the issues we will discuss today – including the forthcoming rulemaking on Carbon Monoxide alarms, and HUD’s new ‘Foster Youth to Independence’ initiative.

“Each of the three bills we are examining today have been thoughtfully put together, and have strong bipartisan support.

“I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on these legislative proposals and I also look forward to working with members of the Committee to identify other items with bipartisan support in the affordable housing space and elsewhere.”

###