

## **NPACH Alert: Proposed Manager's Amendment to HEARTH (H.R. 840) Would Dismantle Good Legislation With Broad Support**

The full House Financial Services Committee was scheduled to mark up the HEARTH Act last Tuesday. However, the markup was postponed due to the need for House staff to work on legislative solutions to the foreclosure crisis. *The Financial Services Committee is likely to schedule a meeting for Wednesday, July 30, to consider housing bills. We urge the Committee not to consider the HEARTH Act during this markup. Instead, the House should work more closely with NPACH and other advocates to improve key elements of the bill. To make this happen, calls are needed now.*

### **Background:**

NPACH assisted in the drafting of the original HEARTH Act. Unfortunately, if the markup proceeds, the Committee is all but certain to entertain, and may approve, a full substitute amendment offered by Congresswoman Maxine Waters, a substitute that would dramatically alter HEARTH so that it resembles the Senate's McKinney-Vento reauthorization legislation – a bill that NPACH opposes.

Last year, NPACH set out three principles for HUD McKinney-Vento reauthorization. HEARTH as introduced closely tracked these key principles.

1. ***Providing assistance to more people who are homeless***, through better alignment between the definitions of homelessness used by HUD and other federal agencies such as the U.S. Departments of Education and Health & Human Services.
2. ***Promoting local solutions to end homelessness***, through elimination of Washington, D.C. imposed bonuses and incentives that restrict community flexibility to provide a true continuum of housing and services to end homelessness, as urban, suburban, and rural areas plan the most efficient use of federal homeless assistance dollars.
3. ***Planning after broad consultation***. In return for increased flexibility, a guarantee that local communities would bring all key stakeholders to the table when planning for how to best use limited federal funds.

**The proposed substitute amendment does not meet any of these principles. Instead, it takes a completely opposite approach. As a result, we must oppose it moving forward until changes can be made.**

### **Action Needed Now:**

Two actions are needed by Thursday.

1. ***Call members of the House Financial Services Committee*** - To see if your local Representative is a member of the Committee, go to: <http://financialservices.house.gov/who.html>. If your Representative is on the Committee, call their office, speak to the staff person who works on housing issues, and ask them to do two things.
  - a. Have the HEARTH Act postponed from the markup calendar, so Committee staff can work with NPACH and other advocates to better resolve key issues around the homelessness definition and federal set-asides.
  - b. If a markup proceeds, support the planned "Homeless Children and Youth Amendment" to allow homeless children, youth, and families who are verified as homeless by other federal programs to be eligible for HUD homeless assistance services. While passing this amendment will not make the bill perfect, this is an opportunity to substantially improve the bill if it moves forward.

Everyone should also call House Financial Services Committee Chairman Barney Frank at (202) 225-5931 and Housing Subcommittee Chairwoman Maxine Waters at (202) 225-2201. Deliver the same message when making these calls.

2. ***Endorse the Homeless Children and Youth Amendment*** – In order to pass the "Homeless Children and Youth Amendment," we'll need as many supporting organizations as possible. NPACH is proud to stand with a diverse group of well-known partners in support of the Amendment. Here are just a few of them – National Education Association, National Network to End Domestic Violence, American Bar Association, National PTA, and the United Way of America. Our organizations understand the importance of a federal homelessness policy that provides local communities with the flexibility necessary to meet the unique needs of everyone who is homeless. Please join us!

*To support the amendment, please email Jeremy Rosen at [jrosen@npach.org](mailto:jrosen@npach.org). In the body of the email, indicate your support for the amendment, and include your organization's name and location.*