

NAHMAanalysis

NATIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

Ensuring NAHMA Members Receive the Latest News and Analysis of Breaking Issues in Affordable Housing

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115th Congress: Who to Contact for Affordable Housing Policy

Background

The 115th Congress will convene from January 3, 2017 to January 3, 2019. The House of Representatives (House) will consist of 241 Republicans and 194 Democrats, while the Senate has 52 Republicans and 48 Democratic caucus members. NAHMA's mission is to advocate to Congress for the production and preservation of affordable multifamily housing. NAHMA welcomes the opportunity to work with all interested members of Congress to achieve these goals. As NAHMA reaches out to the 115th Congress on affordable housing issues, we recommend our members do the same. This NAHMAanalysis is a simple primer on the key Congressional members and committees that really matter for affordable housing policies before the 115th Congress.

Policy Outlook

Funding: The Trump Administration and Congress, both Republican- controlled, agree that cuts need to be made to the federal budget to reduce the deficit. However, there is substantial disagreement on what federal programs will be cut. It is rumored that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will ask agencies to make cuts of at least 10 percent across their budget requests for FY 2018. The Trump Administration also will be requesting a significant increase in infrastructure investments.

Similarly, the Republican-led Congress has expressed a strong desire to cut the federal budget deeper in the 115th Congress, which would include cuts to rental assistance programs and other HUD programs like HOME. The much discussed Better Way Plan, introduced by Speaker Ryan, calls for block granting most HUD programs to the States. However, the Senate is more bi-partisan and less likely to agree to this aggressive approach. Congress will also have to deal with the aging rural housing portfolio. While, NAHMA believes it will be very difficult to obtain overall increases in spending for federally-subsidized housing programs in the 115th Congress, we are committed to working with Congress to protect funding for affordable housing programs. We expect it will be a significant uphill battle.

Legislation: NAHMA expects the House Financial Services Committee and Senate Banking Committee to focus on legislation to reform HUD, USDA-RHS, and the government-sponsored entities (GSE), Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. NAHMA believes the Committees, particularly on the House side, will likely explore legislation that block grants federal rental assistance, combines HUD/RHS, and privatizes the GSEs. However, the Senate is more bi-partisan, and the Trump Administration does not have stated positions on these issues. As a result, large reforms to agencies may face an uphill battle.

Tax: NAHMA believes the Ways and Means Committee and Senate Finance Committee will focus on repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act and comprehensive tax reform. We are unsure of how tax reform will impact the LIHTC. NAHMA also expects LIHTC reform and expansion legislation will be introduced, similar to bills introduced during the last Congress.

House Leadership

Speaker of the House: Paul Ryan (R-WI)

The Speaker of the House is third in the line of succession for the Presidency, behind the Vice President. The Speaker controls the agenda for the House.

Majority Leader: Kevin McCarthy (R-CA)

The Majority Leader schedules votes on the House floor, and is charged with making sure the proverbial “trains run on time.” He will likely oversee the day-to-day operations of the legislative agenda.

Minority Leader: Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)

The Minority Leader is the recognized leader of the party with fewer members.

Senate Leadership

Majority Leader: Mitch McConnell (R-KY)

In the Senate, an individual becomes Majority Leader if he was the elected leader of his party and has the most Senators caucusing, or aligning themselves, with his party. The Senate Majority Leader’s job is to set the agenda for each chamber; he decides what business comes to the Senate floor, and when it gets a vote.

Minority Leader: Chuck Schumer (D-NY)

The Senate Minority Leader is the recognized head of his or her party. He is generally the person who tries to ensure that his party members get an opportunity to vote on desired amendments, and negotiates time agreements on debate and amendments with the Majority Leader.

House Committees

Each political party have their own rules for choosing committee chairmen. Committee chairs control the legislative agenda, schedule, and enjoy subpoena power. They are members of the majority party. Ranking Members of the committees lead the minority party. They do not control the agenda or schedule of the committees, but they can be influential in crafting legislation and choosing witnesses at hearings.

House Financial Services Committee

Chairman: Jeb Hensarling (R-TX)

Ranking Member: Maxine Waters (D-CA)

The House Financial Services Committee and its subcommittees have oversight responsibility of HUD and the Rural Housing Service. As the appropriate “authorizing committee” for housing issues, consideration of most new housing-related legislation in the House begins here.

Jeb Hensarling (R-TX) will continue serving as the Chair of the House Financial Services Committee, while Maxine Waters (D-CA) will continue as the Ranking Member in the 115th Congress.

Sean Duffy (R-WI) is taking over the Housing and Insurance Subcommittee Chair position, while Emmanuel Cleaver (D-MO) will remain the ranking member on the Subcommittee.

Housing and Insurance Subcommittee Members:

Republican

Sean P. Duffy (R-WI), Chairman

Dennis A. Ross (R-FL), Vice Chairman

Edward R. Royce (R-CA)

Stevan Pearce (R-NM)

Bill Posey (R-FL)

Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-MO)

Steve Stivers (R-OH)

Randy Hultgren (R-IL)

Keith J. Rothfus (R-PA)

Lee M. Zeldin (R-NY)

Dave A. Trott (R-MI)

Thomas MacArthur (R-NJ)

Ted Budd (R-NC)

Jeb Hensarling (R-TX), ex officio

Democrat

Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO), Ranking Member

Nydia M. Velázquez (D-NY)

Michael E. Capuano (D-MA)

Wm. Lacy Clay (D-MO)

Brad Sherman (D-CA)

Stephen F. Lynch (D-MA)

Joyce Beatty (D-OH)

Daniel T. Kildee (D-MI)

John K. Delaney (D-MD)

Ruben Kihuen (D-NV)

Maxine Waters (D-CA), ex officio

Appropriations Committee

Chairman: Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ)

Ranking Member: Nita Lowey (D-NY)

The Appropriations Committee decides how much money federal programs will receive each year and how the agencies will use that money. Their jurisdiction is limited to funding discretionary programs. They do not fund entitlements such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. The Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee is responsible for funding HUD programs. The Subcommittee on Agriculture funds USDA-RHS programs.

The Appropriations Committee Chair in the 115th Congress will be Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ). Nita Lowey (D-NY) will be the Committee Ranking Member.

Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL) continues serving as the T-HUD Subcommittee Chairman, while David Price (D-NC) continues serving as the Subcommittee Ranking Member.

Robert Aderholt (R -AL) serves as the Agriculture Subcommittee Chair. Sanford Bishop (D-GA) is the Subcommittee Ranking Member.

T-HUD Subcommittee:

Republican

Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL), Chairman
Charles Dent (R-PA)
David Joyce (R- OH)

John Culberson (R-TX)
David Young (R- IA)
David Valadao (R- CA)
Tom Graves (R- GA)

Democrat

David Price (D-NC), Ranking Member
Mike Quigley (D-IL)

Katherine Clark (D-MA)
Pete Aguilar (D-CA)

Agriculture Subcommittee:

Republican

Robert Aderholt (R -AL), Chairman
Kevin Yoder (R-KS)
Tom Rooney (R-FL)

David Valadao (R - CA)
Andy Harris, MD (R - MD)
David Young (R - IA)
Steven Palazzo (R - MS)

Democrat

Sanford Bishop (D-GA), Ranking Member
Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)

Chellie Pingree (D-ME)
Mark Pocan (D-WI)

Ways and Means Committee

Chairman: Kevin Brady (R-TX)

Ranking Member: Richard Neal (D-MA)

This is the tax-writing committee and the authorizing committee for entitlement programs such as Social Security, Medicare, etc. Legislation to amend the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program falls under the jurisdiction of this committee.

Kevin Brady (R-TX) will be the Committee Chairman, while Richard Neal (D-MA) will be the ranking member in the 115th Congress.

Senate Committees

While there are specific procedures followed by the Republican and Democratic Caucuses in selecting committee chairmen, the tradition of the Senate generally recognizes that the member of the majority party having the most seniority on the committee becomes chairman. Likewise, the member of the minority party who has the most seniority on the committee becomes the ranking member.

There will be very few committee leadership changes since the Republicans retained control of the Senate.

Banking, Housing, & Urban Affairs Committee

Chairman: Michael Crapo (R-ID)

Ranking Member: Sherrod Brown (D-OH)

The Banking Committee is the Senate counterpart to the House Financial Services Committee. The Subcommittee on Housing, Transportation, and Community Development is the counterpart to the House Subcommittee on Housing and Opportunity.

Michael Crapo (R-ID) takes over the chairmanship. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) remains the committee's ranking member.

Tim Scott (R-SC) is the Housing, Transportation, and Community Development Subcommittee Chair, while Robert Menendez (D-NJ) is the ranking member position.

The leaders of the Banking Committee traditionally have strong bi-partisan interests in affordable housing programs. Last Congress, they unanimously passed HOTMA and held hearings on REAC.

Republican

Michael Crapo, Chairman (R-ID)

Richard C. Shelby (R-AL)*

Bob Corker (R-TN)

Patrick J. Toomey (R-PA)

Dean Heller (R-NV)*

Tim Scott (R-SC)*

Ben Sasse (R-NE)

Tom Cotton (R-AR)

Mike Rounds (R-SD)*

David Perdue (R-GA)

Thom Tillis (R-NC)*

John Kennedy (R-LA)*

Democrat

Sherrod Brown, Ranking Member (D-OH)

Jack Reed (D-RI)*

Robert Menendez (D-NJ)*

Jon Tester (D-MT)

Mark R. Warner (D-VA)

Elizabeth Warren (D-MA)

Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND)

Joe Donnelly (D-IN)

Brian Schatz (D-HI)*

Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)*

Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV)

Appropriations Committee

Chairman: Thad Cochran (R-MS)

Ranking Member: Patrick Leahy (D-VT)

Like its House counterpart, the Senate Appropriations Committee decides how much money federal programs receive, and how it should be spent. The subcommittees noted fund HUD and USDA-RHS programs.

Thad Cochran (R-MS) will remain Appropriations Committee Chair, while Patrick Leahy (D-VT) will remain Ranking Member.

Susan Collins (R-ME) will remain Chair of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (T-HUD) Subcommittee. Jack Reed (D-RI) will remain Ranking Member.

John Hoeven (R-ND) is the new Chair of the Agriculture Subcommittee. Jeff Merkley (D-OR) will remain Ranking Member.

T-HUD Subcommittee:

Republican

Susan Collins (R-Maine), Chairwoman
Richard Shelby (R-Ala.)
Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.)
Roy Blunt (R-Mo.)
John Boozman (R-Ark.)

Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.)
Steve Daines (R-Mont.)
Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.)
John Hoeven (R-N.D.)

Democrat

Jack Reed (D-R.I.), Ranking member
Patty Murray (D-Wash.)
Richard Durbin (D-Ill.)
Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.)

Chris Coons (D-Del.)
Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii)
Chris Murphy (D-Conn.)
Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.)

Agriculture Subcommittee:

Republican

John Hoeven (R-ND), Chairman
Thad Cochran (R-MS)
Mitch McConnell (R-KY)
Susan Collins (R-ME)

Roy Blunt (R-MO)
Jerry Moran (R-KS)
Marco Rubio (R-FL)

Democrat

Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Ranking member
John Tester (D-MT)
Patrick Leahy (D-VT)

Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)
Tom Udall (D-NM)
Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)

Finance Committee

Chairman: Orin Hatch (R-UT)

Ranking Member: Ron Wyden (D-OR)

This is the Senate counterpart to the House Ways and Means Committee. The Finance Committee has jurisdiction for LIHTC bills.

Orin Hatch (R-UT) will remain chair of this committee. Ron Wyden (D-OR) will continue as the Ranking Member on the Finance Committee.

Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Chairman Orin Hatch (R-UT) introduced legislation to expand and reform LIHTC during the last Congress. NAHMA expects the legislation to be re-introduced during the 115th Congress.

Conclusion

With a new Administration and a new Congress, the stakes are very high for affordable housing programs. Members can find additional committee information on websites for the [Senate](#) and [House](#). We encourage members to use the [NAHMA Maps](#) and the [Advocacy Toolkit](#) to help educate your representatives about affordable housing in their Districts and States. If you have questions about policy issues and / or the legislative process, please know that NAHMA is here to help. A great deal of work lies ahead in 2017. With your support, we can have a positive impact for this vital industry and for the residents who need quality housing.