

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:**Megan Taylor |
| July 18, 2018 | 202-224-6244 |

**Heller, Group of Bipartisan Senators Introduce Bill to Create Affordable Housing Task Force**

**WASHINGTON**  — Today, U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) joined Senators Todd Young (R-IN), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Angus King (I-ME), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Doug Jones (D-AL), Cory Gardner (R-CO), Marco Rubio (R-FL), and Chris Coons (D-DE) to introduce the *Task Force on the Impact of the Affordable Housing Crisis Act,* which seeks to better understand and respond to America’s affordable housing crisis by creating a bipartisan affordable housing task force.

For millions of Americans, a lack of affordable housing has negative, profound, and lasting consequences. Research shows that an inability to access safe and affordable homes jeopardizes educational performance and economic mobility, and leaves families with fewer dollars to spend on health care, groceries, and other important expenses – further ingraining families in the cycle of poverty.

In order to solve the housing crisis, we need a better understanding of its impact on other government programs and areas of life. The affordable housing task force will evaluate and quantify the impact of housing costs on other government programs and provide recommendations to Congress on how increase affordable housing options in order to improve the effectiveness of other federal programs.

“Affordable housing remains one of the most pressing challenges facing communities throughout Nevada,” **said Senator Heller.** “Today, Nevada is one of the fastest growing states in both population and economic expansion. While we welcome this explosion of growth and the jobs and economic opportunities that come with it, there is a lack of affordable housing because the demand for it is outpacing the supply. We need to develop solutions, and that is why I am proud to join this bipartisan effort that is focused on identifying solutions to affordable housing shortage that is impacting so many Nevadans.”

“As I travel throughout Indiana, I consistently hear about the need for more affordable housing,” **said Senator Young**. “It’s clear that we need a better understanding of this crisis in order to make the policy changes necessary to help families succeed. Our bill would bring together a group of experts to evaluate the affordable housing crisis and identify solutions to help lift up millions of struggling individuals.”

“This year we were able to boost the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, which has built 90 percent of affordable housing in our country,” **said Senator Cantwell**. “More needs to be done to get to the root causes of the affordable housing crisis and show that the LIHTC is cost-effective and creates jobs.”

“For people across Maine, the need to find affordable housing isn’t just about keeping a roof over your head – it’s about building a foundation for every other aspect of your life,” said **Senator King.** “For someone without safe, decent and affordable housing, every other challenge becomes more difficult, whether it’s pursuing an education, taking care of your health, or seeking out new economic opportunities. This isn’t a partisan issue, or one that is limited to just large cities or small rural towns – it affects everyone, and requires a strong bipartisan effort to identify how we can improve quality of life for people across the nation.”

“A home is often the foundation for a family, yet the affordable housing crisis has left too many Virginia families struggling to find acceptable housing,” **said Senator Kaine.** “Before we can find a solution, we need to look at the root of the problem and then make recommendations on how we can best support American families in need. I’m committed to making sure affordable housing is available across Virginia and this bill is a positive step forward in our efforts.”

“Affordable housing is a critical issue for Alabama families, both in urban and rural communities. Nearly every family budget starts with housing, but for far too many, housing prices continue to rise faster than wages,” **said Senator Jones**. “That’s why this Task Force is so important. It will help Congress understand not only the causes of the affordable housing crisis, but also the effect it has on so many other aspects of daily life. Most importantly, this Task Force will help us take a step towards what’s needed most – solutions.”

“Whether I’m meeting with constituents in rural Colorado, along the front range, or anywhere else in the State, everywhere I go I hear about rising housing costs in our communities,” **said Senator Gardner**. “These costs hold back not only individuals but also entire communities looking to revitalize their economies, retain young families, and recruit new businesses. We need a better understanding of how this is happening and the complete impact it is having on our families and communities so that Congress can act accordingly to make sure that all Coloradans have the ability to have affordable housing. I hope this bipartisan task force moves us closer to a long-term legislative solution to this issue.”

“It is imperative that Congress address the affordable housing crisis that is hurting families across the country,” **said Senator Rubio**. “This bill would help do that by establishing a bipartisan task force that will help make upward mobility more attainable for working class families in the 21st century. I am proud to support this bipartisan legislation so that more of America’s children and families will have a chance to realize their potential.

“Throughout my career in public service, I have been a strong advocate for fair and affordable housing policies. As someone who spent 10 years in county government, I know firsthand how the lack of affordable housing impacts severely disadvantaged vulnerable populations, senior citizens, those with disabilities, and veterans seeking rehousing,” **said Senator Coons**. “It is my hope that this task force, appointed by both Republicans and Democrats in the House and Senate, will evaluate, quantify, and call more attention to the affordable housing crisis, and provide viable recommendations for Congress on how to improve life outcomes for Americans.”

The task force would:

1.         Evaluate and quantify the impact that a lack of affordable housing has on other areas of life and life outcomes for individuals living in the United States, including education, employment, income level, health, nutrition, access to transportation, and poverty level in the neighborhood in which individuals live.

2.         Evaluate and quantify the costs incurred by other federal, state, and local programs due to a lack of affordable housing.

3.         Make recommendations to Congress on how to use affordable housing to improve the effectiveness of other Federal programs and improve life outcomes for individuals living in the United States.

Click here to learn more.

**Support for the Task Force:**

**Barbara Sard, Vice President for Housing Policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities said,**“A growing body of evidence demonstrates the importance of a stable, affordable home in a safe neighborhood to positive health, education, income and other outcomes, but it can be difficult to assess how housing investments may affect the results and costs of other programs. The proposed task force on the impact of the affordable housing crisis is well-designed to answer these important questions.”

**Laurel Blatchford, President of Enterprise Community Partners, Inc. said,**“Enterprise is thrilled to see this bipartisan group of Senators committed to evaluating how our country’s growing shortage of affordable housing affects residents, communities, and the economy,” said Laurel Blatchford, president, Enterprise Community Partners. “Millions of working families, seniors, veterans, and persons with disabilities lack well-designed, affordable homes in thriving communities, which limits the opportunities they have in many areas of life. We applaud this bill and these Senators’ dedication to supporting low- and moderate-income people.”

###

