



LSA Washington

May 22, 2008

National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Included in Senate Bill

LSA was successful in advocating for the National Housing Trust Fund to be included in the Senate Banking Committee mark-up this week. The bipartisan bill creates a National Housing Trust Fund with dedicated funds to build and preserve rental homes for workers with low incomes and those on fixed incomes such as seniors and people with disabilities.

On Tuesday, May 20, the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee marked up The Federal Housing Finance Regulatory Reform Act, legislation intended to address the foreclosure crisis in the United States. An amendment offered by Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) would establish an affordable housing trust fund, to be funded by a regulatory provision on Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, financial government-sponsored entities (GSE). The legislation as it now stands would use the GSE funding for the housing trust fund to pay for a new FHA program to insure refinanced mortgages, with 50 percent of the fund going to the FHA program in the first year and 25 percent in the second year. In the third year, the GSE fund would be decoupled from the FHA program, and the GSE fund would pay 100 percent of the housing trust fund.

While housing advocates are disappointed at the diversion of funds from the affordable housing trust fund for the first two years, the creation of a trust fund which would continue in perpetuity is

great news. The bill will move to the Senate floor sometime after the Memorial Day recess, and if passed, will go to conference committee where the differences between the House and Senate legislation will be negotiated. LSA and LSA members have been advocating for years for the creation and funding of an affordable housing trust fund. LSA will continue to lobby on this important legislation, with updates and alerts to LSA member organizations as they are warranted. If you are not on our alert list, please contact lhasenstab@lutheranservices.org.

--Lisa Hassenstab, MSW, MA

Senate Passes Moratoria on Medicaid Regulations

Just before noon today the full Senate passed an amendment attached to the Iraq Supplemental Spending Bill that would place moratoria on all seven Medicaid regulations. The Senate passed the amendment by a vote of 75 to 22. The bill will be sent back to the House because of differences between the House and Senate bills. A final bill will then be sent to the President. The President has already issued a veto threat. For more information on the Medicaid legislation, please see previous editions of [LSA Washington](#).

--Heather Ansley, JD, MSW

Congress Going Home for Memorial Day Recess

The House and Senate will be out of session next week with many legislators going home to their state and congressional districts. Legislators are likely to participate in Memorial Day parades and other public events during the holiday.

Now is a good time to let your legislators know of your views on legislation and regulations. This is also a good time to arrange for a site visit of your services or a meeting to talk about your concerns and to thank them for supporting your issues.

In addition to the week of Memorial Day, Congress will be out of session during the week of July 4th and during the month of August until Labor Day. For more information about building relationships with your elected officials, please email lcarr@lutherservices.org.

We are interested in hearing how your meetings have gone as well. Please let us know what issues you discuss and we will try to follow up in Washington, D.C.

--Lisa Carr, MSW

May is Older Americans Month, Advocacy Needed for OAA Funding

The Older Americans Act provides important supports for seniors such as senior center services, meals-on-wheels, congregate meals, transportation, family caregiver support, health promotion, community service employment and much more - help to preserve seniors' dignity, health and independence.

Advocates are asking Congress for a nine percent (\$174 million) increase in OAA programs in FY09 and adequate funding for new OAA programs – \$42 million total. Seniors and others

interested in the Older Americans Act are encouraged to contact Congress from the [National Council on Aging Advocacy Website](http://www.nacwa.org) using the sample message provided.

--Lisa Carr, MSW

Senator Grassley Introduces Child Welfare Legislation

On Tuesday, May 20, Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA) introduced S. 3038, the Improved Adoption Incentives and Relative Guardianship Support Act. This legislation would extend the Adoption Incentive Program, increase payments to states for the finalization of adoptions, delink adoption assistance eligibility from the 1996 AFDC income standard, and would allow states to receive federal reimbursement for payments made to legal relative guardians caring for children who would otherwise be in foster care. While not available yet, the bill text will soon be posted on www.thomas.gov.

--Lisa Hassenstab, MSW, MA

HUD Issues Notice of Funding Availability for Section 811 Supportive Housing Program

On May 12, the Department of Housing and Urban Development issued a notice of funding availability (SuperNOFA) for the Section 811 Supportive Housing Program for Persons with Disabilities for FY2008. More than \$99 million is available for the program. The deadline to file an application for funding is July 16. All applications must be filed electronically unless the applicant receives a waiver of this requirement. Please visit <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-8863.pdf> for more information about this funding opportunity. After accessing this link, please visit page 27318 of the Federal Register

for information specific to the Section 811 program.

--Heather Ansley, JD, MSW

HUD Issues Notice of Funding Availability for Intergenerational Housing Program

On April 25, the Department of Housing and Urban Development issued a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for a demonstration program to provide assistance with intergenerational housing units for intergenerational families using the Section 202 program. The purpose of the intergenerational program is to expand the supply of intergenerational housing for very low-income grandparent(s) or relative(s) heads of household 62 years of age or older raising a child. Information on the NOFA can be found at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/grants/nofa08/other/demoelderlysec.pdf>. Applications are due July 2, 2008.

--Lisa Hassenstab, MSW, MA

LSA Sponsors Public Policy Conference Calls in June

Thursday, June 19 - 1:00 pm ET

Future of Affordable Housing Public Policy

Sheila Crowley, President of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, will present on what Congress and the Administration are likely to pass this year – the National Housing Trust Fund Act, Section 202 and Section 811 reform legislation and housing appropriations for FY09. To register for the call, please email advocacy@lutheranservices.org by noon on June 19 and specify the “Housing” call.

Thursday, June 19 – 3:30 pm ET

LSA-DN Public Policy Update

Heather Ansley, Director of Policy and Advocacy for the LSA Disability Network, will

provide an update on public policy initiatives, including current legislation and regulations that are being debated and reviewed on the federal level. To register, please e-mail advocacy@lutheranservices.org by noon on June 18 and specify the “LSA-DN Update” call. This call is sponsored by the LSA Disability Network Public Policy Project.

--Lisa Carr, MSW

Public Policy Websites of Interest to Advocates

OpenCongress tracks bills on your website.

Are you looking for an easy way to stay updated on how legislation is moving on Capitol Hill? Do you want to add this search option on your website? OpenCongress.org has free widgets you can add to your website. For more information, go to: www.OpenCongress.org and look for the article titled “5 Ways to Make OpenCongress Work for You.”

U.S. House and Senate Calendar Online. Want to know when members of Congress are in Washington, D.C. and when they are their home states or congressional districts?

The U.S. House of Representatives calendar can be found at: http://www.house.gov/house/House_Calendar.shtml

The U.S. Senate calendar can be found at: http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/legislative/two_column_table/2008_Schedule.htm

--Lisa Hassenstab, MSW, MA