

Murphy Hails Passage of Legislation to Increase Affordable Housing Opportunities; Bill Includes 2 Amendments Pushed by Murphy

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Contact: Kristen Bossi
(202) 225-4476

WASHINGTON, DC – Last night, Congressman Chris Murphy's (CT-5) proposal to encourage low-income families to save money for college passed the House of Representatives as part of legislation to increase access to Section 8 housing vouchers, which provide vital rental assistance for low-income families, seniors, and the disabled. Murphy's education savings provision would ensure that educational savings accounts won't count against families when they apply for the Section 8 program.

"We shouldn't be penalizing families for planning ahead and saving for their children's college education. This bill is not only an important step towards meeting the real growing need for affordable housing options all over America, it also provides a safeguard for saving for higher education," said Murphy.

This bipartisan measure, which passed 333-83, adjusts the allocation of Section 8 housing vouchers more efficiently by targeting them based more on need, increases access for rural families, and expands the number of families receiving housing vouchers. The bill authorizes an additional 20,000 vouchers in each of the next five years, for a total of 100,000 new vouchers nationwide. Currently, more than 36,000 Connecticut residents are utilizing Section 8 vouchers, including more than 5,000 households in Connecticut's Fifth Congressional District. The bill also allows families to use Section 8 vouchers to assist them in purchasing their first home.

"A home is an irreplaceable component of the American dream. Yet in today's economy, people that play by the rules and go out and get full time jobs still find themselves living in poverty. In Connecticut, hard-working families that simply cannot afford sky-rocketing housing costs rely on Section 8 vouchers – and they give people who have done everything society has asked of them, access to the American dream," said Murphy on the floor of the House of Representatives last night.

As a member of the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity on the Financial Services Committee, Murphy played a role in drafting this legislation. When the Financial Services Committee marked up the bill, two amendments pushed by Murphy were approved. In addition to Murphy's college savings amendment, he joined Representative Lynch from Massachusetts in securing an amendment to help tenants in states like Connecticut, where housing costs can eat up two-thirds of a family's income, by giving public housing agencies the flexibility to address this issue by increasing the value of vouchers in high rent areas.

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