

## House Readies 2018 Spending Minibus

Despite the extra money earmarked for hurricane disaster areas, the House version of the FY 2018 spending blueprint for HUD remains fiscally tight. The House continues slogging through a series of 342 amendments to the eight-bill minibus proposal given a timeframe breather after Congress approved a three-month government funding extension to the current spending cycle.

The House has already cleared amendments to the HUD spending bill. Lawmakers endorsed nine amendments while rejecting five. Two amendments were withdrawn by their sponsors before voting began.

Lawmakers endorsed a major change in the Fair Housing Initiatives Program by diverting HUD funding for autonomous fair housing enforcement organizations -- HUD subsidizes more than 100 such nonprofit groups annually -- to state and local governments. The idea has been gaining traction but it is unlikely to survive in the Senate for the time being.

Enforcement activities of the fair housing nonprofits have been in question for some time. They use testers to catch fair housing violators and receive attorney fees and a percentage of each monetary settlement. Housing advocates fought the amendment which cleared the House on a voice vote.

Six amendments were accepted together by a voice vote, three of which cut deeply into HUD's program to upgrade its computer system. They include:

- Increased funding for the Section 202 Housing for the Elderly program by \$2.5 million, the amount offset by a \$2.5 million cut to HUD's Office of Policy Development & Research.
- A \$2 million increase in the public housing capital fund offset by a cut to HUD's Information Technology (IT) Fund.

- The Public Housing Operating Fund would give up \$10 million to help bolster Community Development Block Grant funding.
- HOPWA funding would be increased by \$19 million, the amount offset by a \$19 million reduction in HUD's IT Fund.
- The IT Fund would be further depleted by transferring \$100 million to the CDBG fund.
- Federal Housing Administration administrative contract expense funding would be cut by \$5 million to bolster Section 4 Capacity Building program funding.

Two Connecticut lawmakers succeeded in diverting CDBG money to study the possible application of federal subsidies to help thousands of Connecticut homeowners repair their homes from the ravages of defective concrete.

By a largely 225-195 party-line vote, the House would bar HUD subsidies for cities that hinder federal interception of illegal immigrants for deportation.

The House rejected five amendments that would have cut Section 8 funding by \$443 million, cut overall HUD funding by 2%, take \$35 million from several HUD accounts to bolster NeighborWorks America funding, and bar any HUD funding from being used to implement, administer, or enforce the Davis-Bacon Act and its prevailing wage requirements.

The minibus bill is expected to clear the House but meet fierce opposition from Senate Democrats.

**Info:** See the text of amendments at <http://tinyurl.com/y9b57jyr>

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