

April 6, 2000

AMERICAN HOMEOWNERSHIP AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2000

Statement of HON. RON PAUL OF TEXAS

[Page: H1917]

AMENDMENT NO. 9 OFFERED BY MR. PAUL

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 9 offered by Mr. Paul: Page 78, after line 20, insert the following new section:

SEC. 408. PROHIBITION ON USE OF AMOUNTS TO ACQUIRE CHURCH PROPERTY.

Section 105 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5305) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection: `(i) **Prohibition on Use of**

Assistance to Acquire Church Property

: Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, no amount from a grant under section 106 may be used to carry out or assist any activity if such activity, or the project for which such activity is to be conducted, involves acquisition of real property owned by a church that is exempt from tax under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C. 501(a)), unless the governing body of the church has previously consented to such acquisition.'.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 460, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. **Paul**) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. **Paul**).

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. PAUL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Chairman, I would first like to thank my colleague, the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. **Kilpatrick**) for cosponsoring this amendment. This amendment is simple and straightforward. The amendment merely states that it prohibits the use of funds for activities involving the acquisition of church property unless the consent of the governing body of the church is obtained. This means that community development block grant money cannot be used to invoke eminent domain and take a church away from the church owners or the occupants without their permission.

It has been done in the past, and it is planned to be done in the future. I think this is a very important amendment to make sure that these funds are not used in this way. I think the point is that private property is very important, that owners do have rights; and quite frequently when

this is invoked, it occurs in the poorer areas where there is less legal protection and legal help.

I am very pleased to introduce this amendment. I am very pleased to have the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. **Kilpatrick**) as the cosponsor.

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PAUL. I yield to the gentlewoman from Michigan, the coauthor.

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Chairman, I stand as a cosponsor of this amendment, and it is a good amendment. We have had several calls in our office today wondering what it is, and we took the opportunity to explain it to them.

Mr. Chairman, let me first thank the gentleman from Iowa (Chairman **Leach**), the gentleman from New York (Mr.

Lazio

), as well as the gentleman from New York (Mr.

LaFalce

), the ranking member, for the fine work that they have done and the entire Committee on Banking and Financial Services. I was a former Member of that committee, and I know the hard work that they do.

No church in America should be denied the opportunity to participate in a developing community. The amendment that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. **Paul**) and I are offering today is to say that no community development block grant funds can be used to take any church, unless that church is involved and does agree in that selection.

With that, Mr. Chairman, this is a good amendment. I commend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. **Paul**

) for bringing it to my attention. We have spoken to the minister and other people who are concerned about this issue. I would move, Mr. Chairman, that we adopt the amendment.

Mr. PAUL. I appreciate the support of the gentlewoman.

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PAUL. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. **Paul**) for bringing this amendment to the House floor to address an important concern. I want to also thank the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms.

Kilpatrick

) as well.

I rise in support of the amendment and want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. **Paul**) for his hard work in getting this to the floor and for his numerous discussions with my staff and with myself to ensure that the various concerns that have been raised have been addressed. I want to thank the gentleman. I am in strong support of it and I urge passage.

Mr. PAUL. I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. **Lazio**) for the support.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PAUL. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I would just join in making it clear that we on the minority side have no objection to the 'render unto Caesar' amendment.

Mr. PAUL. I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Does any Member seek time in opposition?

If not, the question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. **Paul**).

The amendment was agreed to.