

Despite, and partly because of, strong economic growth in Silicon Valley, housing costs remain a concern for many area residents. Real estate prices in Silicon Valley are among the highest in the nation, making affordable housing a serious concern in our region. Many of you have told me about how you face losing your home because of a subprime loan.

This week, the House passed important legislation which addresses the subprime mortgage crisis that has emerged over the past year. The [Expanding American Homeownership Act](#) will provide more affordable mortgage loans for first-time homebuyers by revitalizing the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The FHA will now be able to:

- serve more subprime borrowers at affordable rates and terms
- attract borrowers that have turned to predatory loans in recent years, and
- offer refinancing to homeowners struggling to meet their mortgage payments in the midst of the current turbulent mortgage markets.

I was proud to vote in favor of this bill, as it will have an especially significant impact on our district. Over the years, FHA insured mortgage loans have seen a huge percentage drop in California, and the Bay Area in particular, where the average cost of a home is higher than in most regions of the country. An important provision in the bill raises the single family loan limit to \$500,000 for FHA backed loans, enabling more families in expensive areas like the Silicon Valley to own a home.

I have also worked with my colleagues to advocate for federal dollars to organizations such as the [Housing Trust of Santa Clara County](#), which provides gap financing to developers of affordable multi-family rental units, emergency shelters, transitional housing, and housing for special needs populations. The Housing Trust also created the First-Time Homebuyer Assistance Program to give workers better opportunities to buy their first home. Programs such as these are essential for first-time homebuyers who would not otherwise be able to buy a home and help people put down roots, spend more time in family activities, and be more involved in their children's lives, their schools, churches, and civic activities.

Owning a home is part of the American dream, and I look forward to continuing my work in Congress to expand that opportunity to more families in our district.