



National Association of Federal Credit Unions

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Fred R. Becker, Jr.
President and CEO

March 18, 2013

The Honorable Tim Johnson
Chairman
Senate Committee on Banking,
Housing and Urban Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Michael Crapo
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Banking,
Housing and Urban Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Crapo:

On behalf of the National Association of Federal Credit Unions (NAFCU), the only trade association exclusively representing the interests of our nation's federal credit unions, I write today with respect to tomorrow's hearing, "Bipartisan Solutions for Housing Finance Reform." As you know, the future of housing finance is of great importance to our nation's credit unions. NAFCU member credit unions appreciate your leadership on this issue and look forward to working with the Committee on ensuring community based financial service providers have unequivocal access to the secondary mortgage market moving forward.

NAFCU would like to stress the importance of retaining a system that provides credit unions with the access to the secondary market and the liquidity necessary to serve the mortgage needs of their 95 million members. We look forward to working with you and the Committee on this important issue. To that end, we believe the core principles outlined below must be considered to ensure that credit unions are treated fairly during any housing finance reform process:

- A healthy and viable secondary mortgage market must be maintained. A secondary mortgage market, where mortgage loans are pooled and sold to investors, is essential in providing the liquidity necessary for credit unions to create new mortgages for their members.
- There should be at least two Government Sponsored Enterprises (GSEs). To effectuate competition in the secondary market and to ensure equitable access for credit unions, NAFCU supports the creation or existence of multiple GSEs that would perform the essential functions currently performed by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. These entities should have the ability to purchase loans and convert them into mortgage backed securities (MBSs), each of these functions serves to facilitate mortgage lending.
- The U.S. government should issue explicit guarantees on the payment of principal and interest on MBSs. The explicit guarantee will provide certainty to the market, especially for

investors who will need to be enticed to invest in the MBSs and facilitate the flow of liquidity.

- Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have been crucial partners for credit unions and have served an important function in the mortgage lending industry. Both have been valuable entities to the nation, particularly to the nation's economy. It is important that during any transition to a new system (whether or not current GSEs are to be part of it) credit unions have uninterrupted access to the GSEs, and in turn, the secondary market.
- We could support a model for the GSEs that is consistent with a cooperative or a mutual entities model. Each GSE would have an elected Board of Directors, be regulated by the Federal Housing Finance Agency, and be required to meet strong capital standards. The GSEs should also meet other appropriate regulatory standards to limit their ability to take on risk while ensuring safety and soundness. Rigorous oversight for safety and soundness is also paramount.
- A board of advisors made up of representatives from the mortgage lending industry should be formed to advise the FHFA regarding GSEs. Credit unions should be represented in such a body.
- While a central role for the U.S. government in the secondary mortgage market is pivotal, the GSEs should be self-funded, without any dedicated government appropriations. GSE's fee structures should, in addition to size and volume, place increased emphasis on quality of loans. Credit union loans provide the quality necessary to improve the salability of agency securities.
- Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac should continue to function, whether in or out of conservatorship, and honor the guarantees of the agencies at least until such time as necessary to repay their current government debts. Legislation to reform the GSEs should ensure that taxpayer losses are not locked in, but should allow for time for the GSEs to make taxpayers whole.
- At this time, NAFCU does not support full privatization of the GSEs because of serious concerns that small community-based financial institutions could be shut-out from the secondary market.
- The Federal Home Loan Banks (FHLBs) serve an important function in the U.S. mortgage market. Most importantly, they provide their credit union members with a reliable source of funding and liquidity. Throughout the financial crisis, despite experiencing financial stress, the FHLBs continue to be a strong partner for credit unions. Reform of the nation's housing finance system must take into account the consequence of any legislation on the health and reliability of the FHLBs. Importantly, access to FHLBs for small lenders should not be impeded in any way.

We hope that the Committee will be able to incorporate these principles into any final solution on housing finance reform.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input on this critical issue. NAFCU welcomes the opportunity to provide additional views on housing finance reform as the legislative process moves forward. If my colleagues or I can be of assistance to you, or if you have any questions regarding this issue, please feel free to contact myself, or NAFCU's Senior Associate Director of Legislative Affairs, Jillian Pevo, at (703) 842-2836.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fred Becker Jr.', written in a cursive style.

Fred Becker Jr.
President/CEO
National Association of Federal Credit Unions

cc: Members of the Senate Banking Committee