

We Need More Affordable Housing for Seniors

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All senior citizens in our community deserve to live their American Dream of a secure retirement after a lifetime of hard work. I was proud to recently introduce legislation to put this dream within reach of more seniors by expanding and improving Section 202 affordable housing for seniors.

Charlotte County is home to one of the largest and most vibrant retirement communities in America. Seniors from around the country and the world come here to enjoy their golden years after a lifetime of working, raising their families, and strengthening our communities. Unfortunately, the high costs of homeowners insurance, prescription drugs, gas, and housing have made the cost of living in our communities unmanageable for many seniors on a fixed income.

Congress established the Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program in 1959 to provide affordable housing for seniors with very low incomes. The program is the only Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program that provides housing exclusively for seniors.

While there are currently nearly 16,000 Section 202 assisted living units for seniors in Florida, the supply of affordable housing is not enough to meet growing demand. At the Section 202 facilities that I have visited, there are long waiting lists of up to two years or more. Port Charlotte is hit especially hard, since the supply of affordable housing has not completely rebounded from the damage caused by Hurricane Charlie.

The bill I have introduced will help strengthen the Section 202 affordable housing program by maintaining and improving existing housing, allowing housing-providers to adjust to cost fluctuations, and expanding the supply of affordable housing for seniors. These modifications will go a long way in making sure all seniors have the opportunity to live with dignity in our community.

I believe we have a responsibility to honor the American Dream of our seniors. Making sure our parents and grandparents have access to affordable housing, prescription medications, and healthcare is not just good policy, it is a moral imperative. I will continue working to improve the lives our seniors and make sure they have a voice in Congress.

Congressman Tim Mahoney

Florida's 16th Congressional District