



Congresswoman Stephanie Murphy

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Publication of Report

“Missing Millions of Homes: Preliminary Findings of the New Democrat Coalition Housing Task Force”

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All Americans, especially families with children, deserve to live in safe and clean housing. A good home is the foundation for a good life.

While our nation faces numerous challenges, it’s clear from the evidence we gathered that something is very wrong with housing in America.

Years after the housing crisis, our economy is not providing enough housing options. In regions where population is growing, like my central Florida district, the cost of shelter is rising for everyone, including both renters and homeowners. So, it is both an affordable housing problem and a housing affordability problem.

In almost every American city seeing rapid growth, like Orlando for instance, housing becomes a game of musical chairs. We end up with more people than housing units. And, when the music stops (or the rent increases), the unlucky are left homeless. Our society has failed to overcome this fundamental problem of too many players and not enough chairs.

Despite a strengthening economy and a decade of surging federal investment to end homelessness, the homeless population grew in 2017.

Over 550,000 Americans sleep in shelters or on the street on a typical night.

In Orlando, the housing problem is particularly acute. While every major metropolitan area in the nation has a shortage of available and affordable rental homes for extremely low-income families, the Orlando region has the second-most severe shortage in the country, tied with Los Angeles and behind only Las Vegas.

The problem in Orlando is compounded as we welcome American citizens from Puerto Rico fleeing the economic crisis in the U.S. territory and the damage caused by Hurricane Maria. The demand for affordable housing keeps growing, while the supply stagnant.

I can tell you that, when I speak to constituents, the lack of housing options is often cited as the most pressing problem they face.

For those Orlando residents who do have housing, most spend the majority of their paycheck on housing costs.

There is no magic wand we can wave at the federal level to ensure we build millions of new housing units, which is ultimately what we need to do. But it is clear we need to consider new and creative ideas at the federal, state and local levels so supply can keep pace with demand.

Our preliminary Task Force report clearly identifies the nature of the housing problem and helps explain its causes.

These causes include zoning and land-use regulations, the shift in demand to walkable transit-served cities, difficulty obtaining construction financing, and the fact that the construction labor pool is not increasing or getting more productive.

The first step in resolving any problem is to acknowledge you actually have a problem and then study the problem. You do this to find solutions that are smart, thoughtful, and enduring.

And that's exactly what we're trying to do here and plan to continue to do going forward. Thank you.