



BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER

Housing America's Future: New Directions for National Policy

Report of the Bipartisan Policy Center
Housing Commission

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About the Housing Commission

- **Created by the Bipartisan Policy Center, a non-profit organization founded in 2007 by former Senate Majority Leaders Howard Baker, Tom Daschle, Bob Dole and George Mitchell**
- **Launched in October 2011 with four co-chairs:**
 - Christopher S. “Kit” Bond – Former U.S. Senator; Former Governor of Missouri
 - Henry Cisneros – Former Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development
 - Mel Martinez – Former U.S. Senator; Former Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development
 - George J. Mitchell – Former U.S. Senate Majority Leader
- **Composed of 21 members drawn from diverse political and professional backgrounds**
- **Report, *Housing America’s Future: New Directions for National Policy*, issued February 25, 2013**

Housing Commission Principles

- **A healthy, stable housing market is essential for a strong economy and a competitive America.**
- **The nation's housing finance system should promote the uninterrupted availability of affordable housing credit and investment capital while protecting American taxpayers.**
- **The United States should reaffirm a commitment to providing a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.**
- **The primary focus of federal housing policy should be to help those most in need.**
- **Federal policy should strike an appropriate balance between homeownership and rental subsidies.**

Principal Areas of Recommendations

- **The Continuing Value of Homeownership**
- **Reforming Our Nation's Housing Finance System**
- **Affordable Rental Housing**
- **The Importance of Rural Housing**
- **Aging in Place: A New Frontier in Housing**

Aim of BPC Report - A Call to Action

- **Provide guidance on how best to respond to challenges, such as -**
 - **Homeownership remaining out of reach for far too many families;**
 - **Limited access to credit impeding the nation's economic growth;**
 - **Rising rental housing costs as demand continues to increase;**
 - **Desire to age in place in one's own home through senior years.**
- **Serve as a catalyst for bipartisan action**
- **Visit www.bipartisanpolicy.org/housing to download the report**

The Importance of Rural Housing

Snapshot of Rural Housing

- **Median income for rural households (\$40,038) is more than 20 percent lower than the median income for urban households (\$51,998)**
- **Rural poverty rates are higher than national poverty rates, at 16.5 percent and 15.1 percent respectively**
- **Nearly 30 percent of all rural households spend more than 30 percent of the monthly income on housing costs and are considered cost-burdened**
- **Rural housing is generally older, with approximately 35 percent of rural rentals building more than 50 years ago**
- **Nearly 6 percent of rural homes are either moderately or severely substandard – without hot water, or with leaking roofs, rodent problems, or inadequate heating systems**

Rural Housing: Recommendations

- **Support and strengthen USDA's role in rural housing to leverage the existing resources and infrastructure of rural service providers**
- **Extend the current definition of rural areas through the year 2020, pending the availability of decennial census data**
- **Increase budget allocations to serve more households**

Additional funding for the Section 502 Direct Loan program should be contingent on an evaluation of underwriting risks associated with the program.

- **Dedicate resources for capacity-building and technology to strengthen USDA providers**