



State of South Carolina

Office of the Governor

MARK SANFORD
GOVERNOR

Post Office Box 12267
COLUMBIA 29211

June 2, 2009

The Honorable Robert W. Harrell, Jr.
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Post Office Box 11867
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

Dear Mr. Speaker and Members of the House:

I hereby veto and return without my approval H. 3919, R. 188, which creates a South Carolina Housing Commission. Though well intentioned, we believe H. 3919 creates an overlap and duplication of the South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority (Authority). In addition, the legislation serves as a substitute for standing Committees already existing in the House and Senate.

First, the purpose of this legislation is to establish the South Carolina Housing Commission, which is tasked with delivering an annual report on the availability of "safe, sound, and affordable housing...for every South Carolinian." The Authority already exists to further the goal of giving all South Carolinians "the opportunity to live in safe, decent, and affordable housing," and has done so for almost 40 years.

In the past 20 years the Authority has overseen more than \$1 billion in bond issues to provide first time mortgages to new homebuyers. In Fiscal Year 2008, the Authority devoted more than \$107,000,000 to housing assistance and invested more than \$287,000,000 in affordable housing. This helped finance 5,157 homes and apartments and created 10,410 new jobs. The Authority has done all of this while maintaining a foreclosure rate equal to or below that of the Mortgage Bankers Association of America. Though the Commission is billed as more of a study committee, it simply adds another layer of bureaucracy without any of the responsibility of delivering results.

Second, this Commission is to undertake data collection and review of federal legislation, which are roles reserved to standing legislative committees. In the past, the General Assembly has enacted committees to tackle major issues. The most recent example is school financing, which is one of the toughest challenges our state will face in the next generation. Both the House and

The Honorable Robert W. Harrell, Jr.

Page Two

June 2, 2009

Senate enacted separate standing committees to review this legislation for the past three years. There have also been efforts to create a statutory Commission on Base Closures, which has a direct effect on four communities in our state, but on two occasions vetoes have been sustained. If, in those cases, there was no need for a statutory commission, it defies logic that there should be one in this case, when a state agency already exists for this purpose.

It is particularly interesting that the only recorded vote on this legislation came in the House where less than half of the body even voted on the legislation, passing it 58-0. I would urge you and your colleagues to reject this bill and, instead, work with the preexisting State Housing Authority and this administration to further strengthen the state's existing commitment to ensuring every South Carolinian has access to safe, sound and affordable housing.

For these reasons, I am vetoing and returning H. 3919, R. 118, to you without my signature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Sanford', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Sanford