

There are two proposed amendments in the bill relating to low-rent public housing. One pertains to leased private housing authorized by the Congress last year. The amendment would permit local housing authorities to lease dwellings without regard to the 3-year limitation in the present law in cases where the housing is needed for low-income families displaced by urban renewal, highway construction, or other governmental actions.

The leasing provision is particularly helpful in providing housing for large displaced families, many of which have been on the waiting list for public housing for many years. Local housing authorities cannot assure what will happen to these families when the short-term leases end. Authority to enter into leases with longer terms would prevent further insecurity, and in some cases the actual hardship of any additional displacement, for these families.

The second amendment would make the formula for providing assistance to low-rent housing, as it was amended by the 1965 act, available for the leasing of housing to be constructed, as well as to existing housing. Increasing interest is being shown by private enterprise in working with public housing authorities in the development of housing for use by the authorities. This results in costs substantially lower than can be achieved when the authorities plan and construct the housing themselves. The amendment would provide additional stimulus for much greater participation by private building interests in the low-rent housing program.

The rising costs of housing construction, and increasingly complex problems of urban growth, make it imperative that we make the most use at least of the technological advances in design and urban development.

The bill would direct the Secretary to conduct studies and research to demonstrate methods of applying technological advances and to encourage and promote their acceptance by industry, communities, and the general public. These are matters where the Federal Government can and should assert leadership.

Title II of the bill contains no substantive provisions. It makes necessary adjustments in the wording of Federal statutes to reflect the new names of offices and officials provided in the Department of Housing and Urban Development Act.

Before concluding my remarks, Mr. Chairman, I would like to endorse H.R. 9256, which you introduced last session, and which is now before this committee.

That bill would establish a new program—administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development—of mortgage insurance and direct loans to finance the provision of facilities for group medical and dental practice. The President, in his message last year on advancing the Nation's health, recommended establishment of such a program, which is urgently needed in order to assure the most effective use of our limited supply of doctors and medically trained personnel.

I understand that Mr. Wilbur Cohen, Undersecretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, will testify on the bill tomorrow. Mr. Brownstein, our Assistant Secretary for Mortgage Credit, will accompany him and testify on behalf of the Department.

Thank you, sir.