



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

*The Voice For Real Estate®*

500 New Jersey Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20001-2020  
202.383.1194 Fax 202.383.7580  
[www.realtors.org/governmentaffairs](http://www.realtors.org/governmentaffairs)

Richard F. Gaylord  
CIPS, CRB, CRS, GRI  
President

Dale A. Stinton  
CAE, CPA, CMA, RCE  
EVP/CEO

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS  
Jerry Giovaniello, Senior Vice President  
Walter J. Witek, Jr., Vice President  
Gary Weaver, Vice President

April 29, 2008

The Honorable Bob Filner  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
2428 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Filner:

The 1.2 million members of the National Association of REALTORS® urge your support of H.R. 4884, the "Helping Our Veterans to Keep Their Homes Act of 2008." The brave men and women of our Armed Forces deserve the full benefit of the VA home loan guarantee program, and this legislation will help achieve that goal.

Created under the GI bill, the VA home loan guarantee program made its first loan for a home in 1944. Today, the VA has guaranteed well over 18 million loans to American veterans. However, with the increasing costs of housing, and abuse in the subprime market, we believe additional enhancements are needed to improve the program's usefulness and position it as a viable homeownership vehicle in this changing world.

H.R. 4884 enhances the VA home loan guaranty program to assure our military families have the opportunity to reach the American dream of homeownership. The bill makes four main changes to the VA program that NAR strongly supports.

The bill includes two provisions to ease refinancing for veteran homeowners. Veteran homeowners are among those who are currently in a risky sub-prime loan that they will not be able to afford when the interest rate or loan terms reset. But current law makes it nearly impossible for veterans to refinance into a VA home loan. The bill will reduce the equity required to refinance into a VA loan and increase the loan limits for refinancing to be more in-line with VA purchase requirements.

In addition, the bill will raise the VA loan limits in high cost areas. Of the 25 million veterans currently alive, sixty percent (60%) live in urban areas – many of which are high cost. Veterans in these areas should not be penalized for geographic differences in the housing market. Lastly, H.R. 4884 extends authority for the VA home loan guaranty to offer ARM products. While the vast majority of VA loan guarantees are for fixed term loans, ARMs offer veterans flexibility that is appropriate for families that may often relocate or can anticipate increases in rank and salary.

The National Association of REALTORS® strongly supports H.R. 4884, and asks for your support. We believe this bill will enhance the VA home loan guarantee program and fulfill the promise of housing opportunity for our nation's veterans.

Sincerely,

Richard F. Gaylord, CIPS, CRB, CRS, GRI  
2008 President, National Association of REALTORS®