

## U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

### Senate Floor Speech on the Low Income Housing Tax Credit

July 31, 2024

[\[AUDIO\]](#) [\[VIDEO\]](#)

**Sen. Cantwell:** Thank you, Mr. President. I come to the floor to join my colleague, the Chair of the Finance Committee, and thank him for his incredible leadership on the Tax Relief for American Families [and] Workers Act.

I can't think of a more critical effort than the leadership role he has played to negotiate legislation that passed the House 357-70.

Now, when in this institution do you see such a big and tremendous vote across many different aspects of financial and tax policy that affects Americans? And yet the House passed it 357-70, and somehow our colleagues here don't understand there is that much support behind that legislation.

Mr. President, I want to enter into the record, on behalf of 140,000 members of the National Association of Homebuilders, their support, their very strong support for the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act. I think that's an important organization that knows and understands how much affordable housing we need in America, and how this underlying bill addresses that by building over 200,000 more affordable units in the next two years.

It really is a shot in the arm at a time when Americans know that the cost of their housing has gone up because we haven't built enough supply. And as my colleagues know, especially since the downturn of the financial crisis in 2008, that from big cities to, actually, small towns, the crunch of a lack of housing supply has meant an increase in costs.

That means it hurts the economy overall, like the skyrocketing cost was the largest contributor, [to the rate of] 3% inflation.

So that is why we have an opportunity to do something about that tomorrow. We have the opportunity to do something about the rising cost of housing and to pass this legislation that will build more supply and bring down those costs.

I know our colleagues -- this is a very bipartisan aspect of the legislation. They know that expanding supply works. A 2019 study done by the [D.C.] Office of Revenue Analysis found that renters basically save \$177 per month for every 2,100 units built in the city per year. So literally, you can do the math. When you don't build supply, you're just making everybody else's expenses go up.

So why aren't we building more supply? Well, I can tell you that the Low-Income Housing Tax Credits are a real achievement in bipartisan efforts to build more supply. It basically is the best tool to build affordable housing.

It expands and improves, just as I mentioned from the Home Builders, "LIHTC is the most successful affordable housing production program in U.S. history." And that is why it is so important that we remember this analysis.

A New York study found that for every 10% increase in housing supply, nearby rents decrease by 1%. And yet our colleagues don't want to build more supply?

And, LIHTC properties specifically, new data from Moody's Analytics found that these low-income housing projects, and the renters in the Seattle area, saved a remarkable \$957 per month compared to the average rents in the region.

Now, I could go on and on with my colleagues about why we got into this position. Certainly the downturn of 2008, and when we stopped building more supply. We did have returning veterans who needed workforce housing. We had workforce housing overall in a community like Seattle. But it doesn't matter, Yakima or Spokane, the same dilemma, if you're not building affordable housing, people don't have places to live, and it stymies the economy moving forward.

But we have had seniors living longer. We've had other issues that have made the need for housing a national priority.

So we want to hear what our colleagues say about this very important attack on inflation, [most] of it derived from housing, and study and analysis that says we will lower costs if we just build supply.

Tomorrow we have a chance to build that supply. I hope my colleagues will join us in passing this legislation and driving down the cost for Americans.

I thank the President and I yield the floor.